A Gift to my Sisters

SHAYKH MUFTI SAIFUL ISLAM

JKN PUBLICATIONS

297.
5
HUS

© Copyright by JKN Publications

First Published in June 2013

ISBN 978-1-909114-02-9

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

All Rights Reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

Publisher's Note:

Every care and attention has been put into the production of this book. If however, you find any errors they are our own, for which we seek Allāh's ﷻ forgiveness and reader's pardon.

Published by:

JKN Publications
118 Manningham Lane
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD8 7JF
United Kingdom

t: +44 (0) 1274 308 456 | w: www.jkn.org.uk | e: info@jkn.org.uk

Book Title: A Gift to my Sisters

Author: Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām

Design & Layout by **iDesign** | e: IslāmicDesign@jkn.org.uk

"In the name of Allāh, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful"

Contents

Introduction	8
The Reality of Nikāh (Marriage)	11
Domestic Life: An Ibādah	13
The Dilemma & Fate Facing Western Society	14
Advice for the Wife	15
Religious Upbringing Programme	15
Parents and the Ideal of the Holy Prophet ﷺ	19
Serving Parents after their Death	23
Calligraphy and Composition	24
Share of Mothers in Upbringing Children	25
Shunn's Search for a suitable Wife	26
Giving Charity to one's Husband	28
Just Five More Minutes	29
Controlling the Tongue	30
Controlling the Temper	32
Allāh's ﷻ Countless Favours	34
The Opinion of a Woman saved the Army	37
Provide your Children with a Well-Balanced Diet	38
Provide your Children a Good Breakfast	40
Important Advice on the Moral & Character Building of the Child	41
Eight Lies of a Mother	42
For what Sin was she Murdered?	45
The Generosity of Sayyidah Ā'ishah ؓ	46
Have you packed your Suitcases?	47
The Etiquette of Conversing with one's Husband	52
Woman's Reflection on Leading Prayer	55
Women Encouraged to offer Salāh at Home	59
Marry Daughters to Pious Men	60
The Farmer's Daughter	63
The Most Just, the Most Merciful	66
The Ill-Used Cow	67
Ten Points to Maintain a Happy Marriage	68
Inculcate in Children the Habit of Reading	70
The One who Deceives us is not from us	72
Hilarious Hijāb	74
Tasbeehāt of Sayyidah Fātimah ؓ	76
Living Happily	78
Mother's Day is Everyday	80
Inform the Women	83
The World is Full of Sons and Daughters like You and Me	84
Finders Keepers	86
A Child's Plea	87
Rocking with Me	88
Secrets of Happy Couples	89
I've Learned	91
Story of Patience, Trials and Testing times	93
Why Women Cry?	96
Bend but don't Break!	97
Reflections of a Mother	99
A Glass of Milk	100
I'll be Happy when...	101
Sound Advice from a Wise Woman	103

Mother	
Precious Pearl	107
Muslimah	110
An Islamic Upbringing	112
Women and Children	115
A Couple's Conversation	117
Do you know what the Latest Gossip is?	124
You are what you Wear	126
Disrespecting Your Husband	130
The Trickery of Shaytān	133
82 Year Old Becomes a Hāfiz	137
When you Look at me	141
The Fortunate Woman	147
Poison your Mother-in-Law	148
Disease of the Tongue	149
Are the Signs of the Hour here?	152
Nagging	154
Advice to a Daughter	164
Save Yourself	166
Learn a Lesson from Sayyidah Fātimah ﵂	170
A Woman Dies on seeing the Holy Prophet's ﷺ Grave	171
Rules for a Happy Marriage	173
Sayyidah Umme Habeebah's Behaviour towards her Father	174
Hijāb	174
Mothers were once Daughters	177
A Child's Love	178
The Golden Box	180
A Fascinating story of a Jewish Girl	181
Showing Ingratitude	182
Hijāb	183
Exactly whom do we Dress for?	184
Rābiyah Basriyyah	186
Designer Eye-Brows	188
A Brave Woman	189
Stop Complaining Woman!	192
An Incident of Patience	194
Women in the Field of Knowledge and Islamic Arts	196
You Are Special...	197
	202

Introduction

All praises are due to Allāh ﷻ. May peace, salutations and blessings be upon our guide, mentor, our final and beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, upon his noble Sahābahs, Tābi'een and upon those who follow their noble lifestyles until the Day of Judgement.

In many societies, a woman is identified as a second class citizen and deprived of many basic rights enjoyed by the male population. On the contrary, Islām is a religion which formally grants woman a status never known before. The Holy Qur'ān contains hundreds of teachings, which apply both to men and women alike. The Holy Qur'ān states: **"He has created you from a single soul, after which He made a spouse from the soul." (39:6)**

The moral, spiritual, social and economic equality of men and women as propagated by Islām is unquestionable. Islām has assigned a position of dignity, honour and comfort to women. Allāh ﷻ has given the same promises to men and to women, He praises women in the Holy Qur'ān as He praises men as mentioned in Sūrah Ahzāb,

"Indeed, the Muslim men and women, the believing men and women, the obedient men and women, the truthful men and women, the patient men and women, the humble men and women, the men and women who give charity, the men and women who observe fasting, the men and women who guard their chastity and the men and women who remember Allāh

with their hearts and tongues. Allāh has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward (Paradise)." (33:35)

This indicates that women are the twin halves and companions of men and that both their rewards are stored with Allāh ﷻ as quoted in the Holy Qur'ān, **"As for that male or female who does good and is a believer, We will certainly grant them a good life and most surely reward them for the good that they do." (16:97)**

Women play an essential role in the formation of society. If she is able to bring her children up islamically and upright, then the nation will emerge prosperous and content.
This book, 'A Gift to my Sisters' compiled by Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām will help women understand some characteristics adopted by our pious predecessors and help them become a true role model and an example to emulate in different societies, Muslim or Non-Muslim.

It is a good book for young or mature women regardless of their role in life, whether they are wives, parents, business women or a working woman containing short and inspiring passages that can lead each and every woman to deepen their knowledge of the concepts mentioned. It urges our sisters to rejoice in their religion and it can bring hope and glad tidings to individuals who feel distressed, worried and sorrowful. It also addresses her rational mind telling her to be patient and always seek reward in Allāh ﷻ and most importantly not to give up in life.

May Allāh ﷻ give us all happiness in this life and the Hereafter and bestow upon us His unlimited favours. Āmeen!

Furthermore, we should bear in mind that this book will introduce us to the true sources of Islām, the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet ﷺ that can only explain the ideal behaviour a woman should adopt in life, her personal and inter personal development, and in her relationship with her Lord, Allāh ﷻ.

May Allāh ﷻ accept the efforts of all those who have participated in the writing and compilation of this book especially my beloved teacher and Shaykh, Mufti Saiful Islām and reward them in the life of this world and the Hereafter. Āmeen!

Maulāna Ismāeel Aziz
Graduate of JKN
June 2013

The Reality of Nikāh (Marriage)

Shaykh Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi ؒ

Our whole life is one of continuous and perfect questioning. Trade, authority, teaching, all are a form of questioning wherein one part seeks and another is liable. Moreover, every seeker is liable and every responsible one is a seeker. In our society, we are connected to even the lowest ranking human; because the needs of one are interdependent upon others and no group of people may save themselves from this. It is a feature of civilised human existence.

What is Nikāh (marriage)? This too is a dignified and blessed form of questioning. One noble family approaches another honourable family and requests them for a life companion for their darling in order to fulfil and complete his life. The other family happily accept and fulfil this plea. Taking the glorious name of Allāh ﷻ both now become so enjoined; whereby two individuals who previously were strangers, unknown and detached are now so attached and coupled that no other relationship is even remotely comparable. The fate of one is henceforth attached to the other and the happiness and pleasure of each become intertwined.

All these features are the result of taking the glorious name of Allāh ﷻ, Who has converted Harām into Halāl; impermissible into permissible; negligence and sin into obedience and Ibādah. A total, complete and epic revolution in life. This is why in the Nikāh sermon, Allāh ﷻ is exhorting us to honour His glorious name, otherwise it would be an act of great selfishness, that you take His glori-

ous name to fulfil your objectives and desires but thereafter forget His blessed name and commands throughout your life. **"And fear Allāh through Whom you demand (your mutual rights) and (do not cut the relations of) the womb (kinship). Surely Allāh is Ever an All-Watcher over you." (4:1)**

Today, we are gifting you a new bond, however you are also being reminded of your obligations and rights towards the existing relationships. Events should not transpire whereby in fulfilling rights you only remember your wife and forget your mother; in aiding your in laws you forget and turn away from your father. Lest somebody questions the validity 'that who is there to question me on such matters?'

Allāh ﷻ states, **"Surely Allāh is Ever an All-Watcher over you."** No matter how occupied, affluent, enjoyable and long a life we live, the thought must remain of our death in accordance to the commands of Allāh ﷻ and in the state of Imān.

Finally, just before the bridegroom makes the long-awaited statement 'I have accepted,' for which all have gathered, the Holy Qur'ān is forewarning a message, **"O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allāh and fear him, and speak the truth (always)..."** The newly wed are being advised to ponder upon the huge responsibilities and repercussions of their acceptance. Should anybody adopt this habit of pondering and reflecting before speaking, they will automatically create an awareness of the demands and behaviour expected from them on all occasions. Their entire life and

behaviour will be formulated (in accordance to the Shari'ah) and transformed into an exemplary role model for whom the forgiveness and pleasure of Allāh ﷻ are assured. **"And whomsoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger, he has indeed achieved a great achievement (i.e. he will be saved from Hell-Fire and will be admitted to Paradise)."** (33:71)

Domestic Life: An Ibādah

In Islām, domestic life is not viewed upon merely as a necessity but has been elevated to the status of Ibādah and a medium through which a person gains the proximity of Allāh ﷻ. This is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ gave it practical expression; "From amongst you the finest is he who is the best for his household, and for my family I am the best for them from amongst all of you."

Accordingly, a close study of the Seerah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ will reveal such respect, consideration, justice, appreciation and perception for the natural inclinations of the weaker gender, which are not found in the lives of other great personalities or even other Prophets ﷺ. The informality with his wives; participation in their lawful interests; forethought for their inclinations is incomparable. This mild and friendly approach was not restricted to the womenfolk but encompassed the children also. Even when engaged in such a sublime and beloved activity as Salāh. He would shorten it upon hearing the cry of a child, so that its mother would be saved from anguish. This is the exemplary role model available to humanity and the standard expected when husband and wife

come together with the blessed name of Allāh ﷻ.

The Dilemma & Fate Facing the Modern Day Society

Living in a modern day society, we Muslims have not only to present the beliefs of Islām but we need to also display the true family -structure, domestic and social life of Islām. Modern day culture is rapidly degenerating, everybody is aware of this; this is nothing new or controversial. One of the foremost reasons for this is the breakdown of the family unit. The love, trust and confidence between husband and wife is decreasing and deteriorating day-by-day. The same fate that befell the ancient Greek, Persian and Roman civilisations, I am afraid, appears to be the fate of today's society. Intellectuals and 'think-tanks' are publishing papers and books to resolve this growing social problem.

Despite having overpowered many other cultures and harnessed the resources of this world to reach outer space, they are unable to acquire comfort of the heart and convert their homes into parables of Paradise. In complete contrast, even today in the poor countries, many Muslim couples for whom a basic daily meal is difficult, nevertheless are experiencing the joy of Paradise. How? They forget their dilemma, by looking at each other's face, because of the presence of mutual love, affection and respect. The bond between the couple should be of such a nature that even poverty, destitution and hunger is tolerated and overcome.

Advice for the Wife

Lead a life of contentment. Be content even with simple food. The dry bread and water that have been eaten with contentment is better than an extravagant meal that have been eaten after your persistent complaints forced upon your husband to gradually provide it for you.

Always listen attentively to what your husband says. In this manner, you will soon win a place in his heart, because it is not really a person who is beloved, but what the person does that is most beloved.

Religious Upbringing Programme

Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thānwi ﷺ mentioned that the first words to be taught to a child should be the testimony of believing in the Unity of Allāh ﷻ (Kalimah Tawheed; Lāilāha Illallāh....) thereafter teach them the following etiquettes:

- Always keep the child clean, neat and tidy in simple Islamic clothes devoid of animated pictures and do not over pamper them.
- Keep boy's hair short.
- Instruct them to make Salām upon greeting and reply to the Salām of others whenever they meet any Muslim.

- Explain to them the sin and dangers of lying.
- Incline children towards Allāh ﷻ by constantly reminding them, for example, 'Allāh ﷻ grants us sustenance (food, clothing, home);' 'Allāh ﷻ created the universe,' etc.
- When the child misbehaves, tell them Allāh ﷻ is aware of everything and will get angry. Such constant reminders, especially by the mother will create a vivid awareness of Allāh ﷻ.
- Thereafter teach them the short Sūrahs of the Glorious Qur'ān and the daily Sunnah.
- By the time a child reaches 7 years of age, teach him to perform Salāh and inculcate the habit of making Du'ā for all needs. At the age of 10 years the Shari'ah emphasises that the children perform Salāh with Jamā'at. Nowadays most parents are apathetic with their children's religious obligations, yet in fulfilling worldly needs they go to extremes. Islām is crying and asks such parents, 'Shame! How have you forgotten me completely, why, do you expect others to save your child?'
- When the child reaches the age of learning, try and enrol him in a Madrasah where the scholars are qualified, pious and caring.
- As soon as the child has learnt the rules of correct Arabic recitation and short Sūrahs, proceed with learning the Glorious Qur'ān from a learned person. Should the child show good intelligence and memory it is best to commence Hifz (memorization) of the Holy Qur'ān, otherwise complete Nāzirah (visual recitation).

- After completion of either Hifz or Nāzirah, arrange for the systematic education of Islām. For girls ensure Shar'ee Hijāb from an early age as well as home economics.
- If Allāh ﷻ has granted the means and opportunity, let the child study the Islamic Theology course (at an authentic Islamic institute). Otherwise, guide him towards some Halāl profession, trade or skill, whereby he is able to support himself, his wife and children in life.
- Endeavour to take along mature children with you into the company of pious Mashāikh (saints). Through their blessings and association, Deen and Imān develop.
- Regarding religious education, do not impose unbearable burden upon the child. Gradually increase studies from one hour to two then three and so on. Always take into account the child's health and capacity, as overwork dulls intelligence and memory as well as dampening enthusiasm. At the same time do not allow the child to take 'time-off' from religious studies on trivial excuses.
- Remember to make your child learn the main lessons early in the morning when his mind is fresh; leaving secondary lessons until later when the body is tired.
- From the beginning, inculcate into the child esteem for fellow Muslims. Advise him never to hold the poor in contempt.
- Daily arrange a time at home, wherein you read out aloud some authentic religious books. Try to provide a mixture of juris-

tic rulings, Fadhāil (virtues) and episodes. Do not fear or worry if nobody listens, you continue your daily recital even if it be one or two pages only. Consider it as incumbent as recitation of the Glorious Qur'ān and as necessary as worldly duties.

- Couple all this with the constant supervision of your child's actions and behaviour. For example, should he backbite anyone, correct him, 'This is wrong.' and outline the harms and evil of this sin. Similarly, should he display arrogance, point out the vulgarity of pride. Should he miss Salāh with congregation, admonish him. Whenever he lies or steals, correct and reprimand him with wisdom, never with harshness. Accordingly, it appears in a Hadeeth that Allāh ﷻ curses and punishes a person who steals one egg. Why such severity on an apparently trivial act? Because these small steps open the door for future sins and destruction.

There was once a thief, who eventually got imprisoned and was to be hanged. He requested a final meeting with his mother, who appeared at the prison very distressed. Sitting behind the bars in the visiting room, he asked his mother to come close as he wished to whisper something. She placed her ear between the bars. Her son (the thief) bit it so ferociously causing severe bleeding. The mother yelled out and asked, 'Why did you do that?' Her son replied, 'Mother! From when I was young and began lying, deceiving and stealing, you never reprimanded or punished me. Had you done

so, you would not be witnessing this day. You, by your carelessness and indifference, have shown that you are my clear enemy!'

Parents and the Ideal of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was an orphan but how did he conduct himself with those fortunate beings to whom he had treated like parents? We give here short accounts relating to this topic so that it may provide guidance.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ treated Sayyidah Umme Ayman ؓ, Haleemah Sa'diyah ؓ and Fātimah bint Asad ؓ as his mothers and paid them the utmost respect as he would pay to his own mother.

Sayyidah Umme Ayman ؓ

Āminah bint Wahab ؓ who was the Holy Prophet's ﷺ own mother died when he was only six years of age. She was coming from Makkah to Madeenah with her maid Sayyidah Umme Ayman ؓ and her son the Holy Prophet ﷺ when she died at a place called Abwa'. Sayyidah Umme Ayman ؓ who was a young girl at that time brought the Holy Prophet ﷺ to Makkah. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ passed his mother's grave during a battle, he started weeping and the Sahābah ؓ also wept. This was his love for his beloved mother.

tic rulings, Fadhāil (virtues) and episodes. Do not fear or worry if nobody listens, you continue your daily recital even if it be one or two pages only. Consider it as incumbent as recitation of the Glorious Qur'ān and as necessary as worldly duties.

- Couple all this with the constant supervision of your child's actions and behaviour. For example, should he backbite anyone, correct him, 'This is wrong.' and outline the harms and evil of this sin. Similarly, should he display arrogance, point out the vulgarity of pride. Should he miss Salāh with congregation, admonish him. Whenever he lies or steals, correct and reprimand him with wisdom, never with harshness. Accordingly, it appears in a Hadeeth that Allāh ﷻ curses and punishes a person who steals one egg. Why such severity on an apparently trivial act? Because these small steps open the door for future sins and destruction.

There was once a thief, who eventually got imprisoned and was to be hanged. He requested a final meeting with his mother, who appeared at the prison very distressed. Sitting behind the bars in the visiting room, he asked his mother to come close as he wished to whisper something. She placed her ear between the bars. Her son (the thief) bit it so ferociously causing severe bleeding. The mother yelled out and asked, 'Why did you do that?' Her son replied, 'Mother! From when I was young and began lying, deceiving and stealing, you never reprimanded or punished me. Had you done so, you would not be witnessing this day. You, by your carelessness and indifference, have shown that you are my clear enemy!'

Parents and the Ideal of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was an orphan but how did he conduct himself with those fortunate beings to whom he had treated like parents? We give here short accounts relating to this topic so that it may provide guidance.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ treated Sayyidah Umme Ayman ؓ, Haleemah Sa'diyah ؓ and Fātimah bint Asad ؓ as his mothers and paid them the utmost respect as he would pay to his own mother.

Sayyidah Umme Ayman ؓ

Āminah bint Wahab ؓ who was the Holy Prophet's ﷺ own mother died when he was only six years of age. She was coming from Makkah to Madeenah with her maid Sayyidah Umme Ayman ؓ and her son the Holy Prophet ﷺ when she died at a place called Abwa'. Sayyidah Umme Ayman ؓ who was a young girl at that time brought the Holy Prophet ﷺ to Makkah. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ passed his mother's grave during a battle, he started weeping and the Sahābah ؓ also wept. This was his love for his beloved mother.

Sayyidah Umme Ayman ﷺ rendered selfless service to the Holy Prophet ﷺ at Abdul Mutallib's house so much that he received from her a mother's love during his childhood and also received good nurturing and protection. This had a deep impact upon him. He used to spread his blessed shawl for her to sit and all through his life called her 'mother after mother', saying that she was a reminder of his family. Once she was in the Hujrah (chamber) of Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﷺ when she asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ for a glass of water. Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﷺ said, "The Holy Prophet ﷺ is a respected master and you command him!" At this the Holy Prophet ﷺ said. "Ā'ishah ﷺ, do not say this. She is my 'mother after mother.'" It was her good fortune that the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself served Sayyidah Umme Ayman ﷺ. This was the ideal example of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and it contains so many lessons for us.

Sayyidah Haleemah Sa'diyah ﷺ

Sayyidah Haleemah Sa'diyah ﷺ was the Holy Prophet's ﷺ wet nurse and brought him up till the age of four. Once she visited the Holy Prophet ﷺ in Makkah at the time when he had married Sayyidah Khadeejah ﷺ. She entered his house and when asked by Sayyidah Khadeejah ﷺ as to who she was, she replied, "Haleemah." The Holy Prophet ﷺ heard her voice from inside and came out eagerly and cried, "My mother, my mother," embracing her emotionally. He received her with full respect and inquired about her health and well-being. When she returned from there, Ummul Mu'mineen Sayyidah Khadeejah ﷺ sent her with camel loads of grain and goats as a gift.

During the war of Hunayn, when countless men and women of the tribe of Banū Hawāzin were taken as prisoners by the Muslims, a certain captive lady approached the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said, "O Muhammad! I am your foster sister Sheema bint Haleemah Sa'diyah." When the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked her to prove her identity, she showed her shoulder (and according to some narration her waist) and said that during childhood, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had become angry for a certain reason and had bitten her there. The mark was still there. The Holy Prophet ﷺ started trembling with emotion and spread out his shawl for her to sit down saying, "If you wish you can stay with me. If you want to return, I allow you to do so." Sheema wished to go and the Holy Prophet ﷺ allowed her to return with gifts of numerous goats, saying, "This was the respect and esteem for a foster sister."

A delegation of the tribe of Banū Hawāzin came to tell him that there were many maternal and paternal aunts among the prisoners and if there was anyone who may have suckled the Holy Prophet ﷺ they should not face the indignity of being imprisoned. The Holy Prophet ﷺ heard this and instantly remembered Sayyidah Haleemah Sa'diyah ﷺ .He said, "I release all the prisoners that have fallen in the share of Banū Hāshim. You can appeal for the rest after Salāh and I shall mediate for them." Hence after Salāh, the delegation came to him once again and when the Holy Prophet ﷺ aroused their interest they gladly released their women and men slaves. This was done in honour of 'mother after mother'.

Sayyidah Fātimah bint As'ad ﷺ

Sayyidah Fātimah bint As'ad ﷺ was the Holy Prophet's ﷺ aunt wife of Abū Tālib and mother of Sayyidunā Ali ﷺ. When she died the Holy Prophet ﷺ stood near her bier and said, "O mother, may Allāh ﷻ have mercy upon you. You were my mother after my own mother. You remained hungry to feed me. You were in need of clothes but clothed me." The Holy Prophet ﷺ himself dug her grave with his sacred hands, lay down himself in it for a while and when he came back after burying her, he was holding his beard, while tears rolled out of his eyes. When Sayyidunā Umar ﷺ talked about this to him he said, "After Abū Tālib, no one was so kind to me as she was. I have put my shirt on her so that she may get heaven and I lay down in her grave so that her pain in the grave may be eased. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ prayed for her, "O Allāh! Ease the grave of my mother Fātimah bint As'ad ﷺ, through the intercession of Your Messenger and all Your Messengers who have preceded me. You are Kind and Merciful."

This ideal character of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a beacon to light our way. If we follow it not only will our homes be filled with the blossoms of joy and happiness but also spread peace and happiness within the entire society.

Serving Parents after their Death

According to the Holy Prophet's ﷺ sayings we should observe the following:

1. Continue praying for our deceased parents that Allāh ﷻ forgive their sins and award them higher positions.
2. Respect their friends and well-wishers.
3. Execute their will.
4. Love their living children and loved-ones.

Service to Parents

Uwais Qarni ﷺ was a true lover of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He was a resident of Yemen. When he was asked that despite being a great lover of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, why did he not go to Madeenah for his Ziyārah (to visit his grave). He replied, "Going for the Holy Prophet's ﷺ Ziyārah is my personal desire but following my beloved Prophet's ﷺ command is my foremost duty. I cannot show preference to my personal desire before the Holy Prophet's ﷺ commands. According to his command I am serving my old mother, because she has no other offspring to look after her.

Hence it is evident that love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ entails the obedience of his commands and following his ideal character. Uwais Qarni ﷺ has well stated the urgency of such love.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us the opportunity to serve and obey our parents. Āmeen!

Calligraphy and Composition

Women have been good calligraphers and writers of prose and scribes. Rulers have benefited from their services in official correspondence. The scribe, Ummul-Fadl Fātimah bint Hasan Ibn Ali al-Aqra Baghdādiyah was better known by her Kunya Bintul-Aqra. She was recognised as the best scribe and calligrapher of her times. She copied exactly the script of the well-known scribe Ibnul-Bawwāb and many aspirants learnt the art from her.

Abū Nazr Abdul Malik Kindri ﷺ summoned her to Jabal and asked her to write down the peace treaty between him and the Christian king of Rome. It was written on only one page and Bintul Aqra was paid one thousand Dinārs for that.

Amatul-Azeez Khadeejah bint Yūsuf was a scholar and a Muhaddithah. She also had excellent handwriting, having acquired training from the well-known calligraphers. Fakhrun-Nisā, Shāhidah bint Ahmad was well-known as a Kātibah (calligrapher). Ibn Jawzi ﷺ praised her calligraphy. Ibn Khallikān ﷺ also said that she was a scholar who had excellent handwriting.

The well-known scribe and literary woman of Andalus, Murrah, was the chief scribe of Ameer An-Nāsir Ladinullāh and also a clerk. She had good handwriting. She died in 358 AH. The scribe Muniyah was the (female) slave of Khaleefah Mu'tamid Aliullāh Abbāsi. She was known as Al-Kātibah because of her excellent handwriting. She was also a clerk. She had learnt Hadeeth from

Abū Tayyib Muhammad Ibn Ishāq ﷺ, and Ubaydullāh Ibn Husain Bazzāz Anbari ﷺ narrated from her.

Among the talented scholars of Andalus, Safiyyah bint Abdullāh stood out for her calligraphy. From the female scholars of Andalus, Lubna was also a scribe and clerk. She was the chief scribe of Khaleefah Hakam Ibn Abdur Rahmān Umawi. She was entrusted with the official correspondence. She was also a good accountant, a poet, a grammarian and an expert in other sciences.

Ā'ishah bint Umārah was a literary woman and a poet who possessed an excellent handwriting. She transcribed a book of eighteen volumes with her own hand.

Ibn Fayyād ﷺ has mentioned in Akhbār Qurtubah that there were in the eastern Qurtubah, one hundred and seventy accomplished female scholars who transcribed the Holy Qur'ān in the Kūfi script.

Share of Mothers in Upbringing Children

As queens and shepherds of their homes, women of Islām took deep interest in training their children. The mothers put in tremendous effort to impart to their children religious training and make them heirs of great leaders and chiefs. We cite some examples that should serve as a lesson for our mothers of today.

Imām Yazeed Ibn Hārun Wasti ﷺ (d. 206 AH) held a high rank among the Tabi'Tābi'een (successors of the successors of the Sahā bah ﷺ). He recounted his life story as a student, saying, "I was away from my family for many years. In Baghdad, I learnt from a Tābi'ee scholar at Askar. I went to him and requested him to narrate to me a Hadeeth. He narrated: Sayyidunā Anas Ibn Mālik ﷺ narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "If Allāh ﷻ involves someone in an anxiety then he must show patience. He must again show patience and again show patience."

The Shaykh then said that he would not narrate any other Hadeeth. Then I returned to my native land. I reached home at night and did not knock at the door lest I wake up my family. However, I opened the door somehow and went in. My wife was sleeping on the roof and I saw a young man sleeping by her. I decided to strike him with a stone but I suddenly remembered the Hadeeth of the Shaykh of Askar, so I ceased. I picked up the stone twice or thrice but then checked myself. Suddenly, my wife woke up. Seeing me, she awakened the young man, saying, "Get up! Meet you father." He greeted me warmly. When I had begun the journey, my wife was pregnant. I then realised the blessing of abiding by the Hadeeth."

Shunn's Search for a suitable Wife

Shunn was known for his exceptional intelligence among the Arabs. One day he said, "By Allāh ﷻ, I will search through the lands until I find a wife similar to me, and then I will marry her."

On one of his journeys he met with a man who wanted to travel to the same village that he wanted to go to, and so they accompanied one another. As they started their journey, Shunn asked, "Will you carry me or shall I carry you?" The man said, "O' ignorant one, how can a rider carry a rider?" They continued until they reached a garden full with ripe vegetables, and Shunn asked, "Do you think that these crops have been eaten or not?" The man said, "O' ignorant one, do you not see these vegetables are still here before you?" And they continued until they passed by a funeral procession, and Shunn asked, "Do you think that the man for whom this procession is marching forth is alive or dead ?" The man said, "I have not seen anyone more ignorant than you; do you think that they would carry him to his grave alive?" When they finally reached the village, the man went into his home, while Shunn waited outside. The man had a daughter, named Tabaqah, and he told her the entire story of the man who was standing outside. She said, "When he said, 'Should I carry you or will you carry me?' he meant, 'Will you speak to me or will I speak to you so that we may pass the hours of our journey?' When he asked, 'Whether the crops have been eaten or not?' he meant, Did the owners of the crops sell them and then eat their proceeds or not?' And when he spoke of the dead man, he meant did he leave behind any children or any great work to keep his remembrance alive or not." The man went outside and told Shunn what his daughter said. Shunn proposed, asking for her hand in marriage, and the father married her to him.

Giving Charity to one's Husband

Sayyidah Zainab Ath-Thaqafiyah ﷺ the wife of Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ood ﷺ, related that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Give charity, O' community of women, even if it is from your jewellery."

She returned to Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ood ﷺ and said, "You are a man who is poor, and indeed Allāh's Messenger ﷺ ordered us to give charity. So go to him and ask whether it is considered correct for me (to give you), otherwise I will give it to others." Sayyidunā Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood ﷺ said, "You yourself ask Allāh's Messenger ﷺ (about it)."

She went and found a woman from the Ansār (Helpers) waiting at the door of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. She had come also for a similar purpose. People were in awe of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and so when Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ came out to them, they said to him, "Go to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and inform him that two women are at the door, asking whether they will be rewarded for charity that they give to their husbands and to orphans that are living with them in their homes?"

Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ went in to meet the Holy Prophet ﷺ and he asked him their question. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Who are they?" He said , "A woman from the Ansār and Zainab." The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Which Zainab?" He replied, "The wife of Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ood." The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "(Inform them that)

they have two rewards: the reward of relationship and the reward of charity." (Bukhāri, Muslim)

Note: Charity here means Nafl (optional) Sadaqah not Zakāt.

Just Five More Minutes

While at the park one day, a woman sat down next to a lady on a bench near a playground. "That's my son over there," she said, pointing to a little boy in a red sweater who was gliding down the slide.

"He's a fine looking boy," the lady said. "That's my son on the swing in the blue sweater." Then, looking at her watch, she called to her son, "What do you say we go Yūsuf?"

Yūsuf pleaded, "**Just five more minutes**, Mummy please? **Just five more minutes**." The lady nodded and Yūsuf continued to swing to his heart's content.

Minutes passed and the mother stood and called again to her son, "Time to go now!" Again Yūsuf pleaded, "**Five more minutes** , Mum. **Just five more minutes**." The lady smiled and said, "OK." "My, you certainly are a patient mother," the woman responded.

The lady smiled and said, "My elder son Yahyā was killed in a road accident last year while he was riding his bike near here. I never spent as much time with Yahyā as I could have, and now I

would give anything **for just five more minutes** with him.

I have promised not to make the same mistake with Yūsuf. He thinks he has **five more minutes** to swing but the truth is, I get five more minutes to watch him play."

Controlling The Tongue

Some women have the bad habit of talking about anything and everything that goes on in their household, and this is very sinful indeed. They talk to their next-door neighbour, the lady down the road or on the phone with their friend or relative. Sisters, if you did not spend time on unnecessary gossip your tongue would not be committing a grave sin, and you would not be put to account on the Day of Judgement. Try to utilise this valuable time in a more constructive and useful way. For instance, the next time you feel like going around the neighbour's house for a cup of tea and a chat, or pick up the phone to have a ten minute chat with a friend or a relative, because you need to unwind from the housework and kids, ask yourself what did you do after waking up today, to gain the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. For the sister who is particular about offering her Salāh at the prescribed time, very good. For the sister who also recites the Holy Qur'ān regularly, even better. For the sister who is particular about Salāh and engaging in daily recitation of the Holy Qur'ān and tries to understand the meaning of the Holy Qur'ān by reading the translation of the Holy Qur'ān, excellent. And for the sister who does all this and acquires new Deeni Knowledge daily and imparts this knowledge to her children, out-

standing!

Only when a woman takes up her full role as a mother, that is taking up the responsibility of the correct upbringing of her offspring and carrying out household chores, she will realise that her mind is occupied with far better things and she has no time for idle gossip and it is the idle one who has the time for idle gossip. Remember raising children and maintaining the household is a form of Ibādah (worship) and there is reward for the one who undertakes these tasks. I am not suggesting that one should cut off relations with ones friends or next of kin, this would be contrary to the teachings of Islām. One should keep in touch and enquire their well being but the sole reason should be to acquire the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. By gossiping about 'have you heard such and such' or complaining about your husband's bad habits, how your in-laws are making your life a misery and the list is endless, you are far from gaining the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. Rather you are depriving yourself from the reward you would have otherwise received from the enduring and difficult days with patience. It is a sinful act to backbite about your loved ones and about anyone for that matter and the one who listens to backbiting is also partaking in the sin. When we are burdened with a calamity it is Allāh ﷻ Who can ease our burden, and it is Allāh ﷻ you should be seeking help from and we must make the habit of asking from Allāh ﷻ for all our needs and by fulfilling our duties to Allāh ﷻ, only then can we expect Allāh ﷻ to accept our Du'ās and help us when we are faced with a dilemma. Women and men alike should make the habit of reciting Istighfār (forgiveness from sins) daily and observing patience in times of difficulty. So sisters, the next time you feel like having a good gos-

sip, stop and imagine yourself about the consequences and the punishment you will face in the grave and how you will be put to task on Judgement Day, Inshā-Allāh you will soon give up the evil habit.

Controlling the Temper

Some people tend to quarrel about the most trivial things and before you know it, a huge argument has broken out. This is especially true in the case of a husband and wife who will blame each other for some reason or other. Before long they are both shouting abusive language at each other, they both shout how unbearable it is to live with each other and how they will go their separate ways. The children by now are used to their behaviour and hope it will be over soon as they have seen it many times before. Tell me is this a way to be a role model for our children, who will be the parents of tomorrow? Do we have no modesty when we put on such a shameful and despicable act in front of our children?

What can we expect to gain from showing our anger, other than worsening the situation and letting hatred enter the heart. By now Shaytān is leaping with joy at having gone this far as to create enmity in the heart of the husband and wife. A few minutes ago they were the most loving couple and a few minutes later they fell prey to Shaytān and cannot bear to glance at one another! See how Shaytān can cause a relationship to break up, it is the thing that Shaytān enjoys doing most. And the thing he detests the most is a loving relationship between a husband and wife. One part of her

wants to give in and apologise and put a stop to the argument, when she sees her husband sitting gloomily, not uttering a word anymore. At this point the Shaytān is working further on her when he sees her trying to come to her senses. Don't let this argument die down so easily, put an end to his intolerable ways once and for all. Either he surrenders or you leave him for good. Look he's sitting their expecting you to apologise to him, don't be such a softie this time, why should you be the one who has to apologise when you know that he is in the wrong. If you give in this time he will treat you like this for the rest of your life, is that what you want? I don't think so, so quick, here goes your chance, give it the best you got! STOP Shaytān right here, do not let him advance any further than he already has! This is a dangerous game which Shaytān plays time and time again with peoples lives, sometimes he succeeds, sometimes not.

There are two opponents, Shaytān and your Nafs, he takes control of your Nafs at your expense, you pay the price when he wins but he has nothing to lose when you win. Be steadfast and get a firm grip on yourself, reflect on the teachings of Islām when you are overcome with anger if you are standing, then sit 'recite Tasbeeh or a Du'ā that comes to mind, keep your mind occupied by reciting the Holy Qur'ān or other books of Deeni knowledge. You will feel your anger washing away gradually and shame taking over your anger. When you gaze at your husband now, he doesn't look the least bit like an enemy anymore. Your heart is mellowed as the last traces of hatred drains away. You look at your partner with pity and are ready to apologise, he too turns his gaze upon you and the

anger has faded. Shaytān has lost the battle this time, but he wont give up, he will try again and again. Yes, it is a life long battle and one which we must keep on fighting if we are to succeed in this world and the hereafter. Remember; do not show disrespect to your husband irrespective of who's in the wrong. You are earning the displeasure of Allāh ﷻ all the while your husband is displeased with you. You will see by keeping quiet, the husband will later regret having acted wrongly towards you and will want to please you. Remember how easily the most loving of relationships could end in the most disastrous way and remember when Shaytān has got the better of you, repent to Allāh ﷻ by repeatedly reciting Istighfār and ask forgiveness from those you have shown disrespect towards. Inshā-Allāh, we can hope to be forgiven and Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Allāh's ﷻ Countless Favours

The following story is related by a woman, who centuries ago, endured a difficult, though ultimately faith increasing hardship:

I was once a passenger on a sea vessel and travelling with me were many businessmen. While we were in the middle of the sea, the winds became wild and our ship began to sink. Every passenger and crew member of the ship drowned except for three; myself and my young child, for we both held on to a piece of wood that had broken off from the ship, and a man, who was holding on to another part of the boat that had broken off.

It was during the night that the ship began to sink, so it was near impossible to see anything, but in the morning the other survivor saw us and began to swim towards us holding on with one hand to a piece of wood and struggling with the other in the water in order to reach us. Meanwhile, whilst holding on to my son, I was able to climb the piece of wood that I was hanging on to.

After a long struggle in the water the man finally reached us and climbed the piece of wood we were sitting on. I felt very much disconcerted when he came and sat down beside me. When he tried to seduce me , I said , "O' slave of Allāh ﷻ, do you not fear Allāh ﷻ? We are in a difficult predicament, one from which we can little hope to escape, even if we are obedient to Allāh ﷻ. What do you think then our chances are if we disobey Him?" He said, "Don't make me hear such words, for by Allāh ﷻ, this is something that I must have." My child was sleeping in my lap at the time, and I gently poked him, hoping that he would wake up. He did wake up with a loud cry. I turned to the man and said, "O' slave of Allāh ﷻ, please give me a chance to put my child to sleep, and then after that we can see what Allāh ﷻ has decreed for us."

Instead of heeding to my words, the man tore my son away from my lap and threw him into the sea. I raised my gaze towards the sky and said, "O' One Who is most capable of coming between a person and his heart, make something by Your Might and Power, come between me and this man. Indeed, You are upon all things capable." No sooner did I finish saying the last of those words that a large sea creature rose above the surface of the water, opened its

mouth and swallowed the man who was about to rape me. It the plunged back into the sea, and Allāh ﷻ kept me protected from it jaws.

Although one problem was solved, I was still stranded in the mid dle of the sea. The waves continued to propel me from one direc tion to another until I was finally washed ashore onto an island. remained positive and thought to myself, "I will eat whatever find here, and I will wait until Allāh ﷻ provides relief for me, fo only He can bring help to me now."

Four days passed, and I was struggling as best as I could to sur vive. On the fifth day, as if out of nowhere a ship appeared. climbed a hill and waved my arms frantically, signalling to th passengers of the ship that I needed help. They saw me and thre men climbed a small raft and came towards me. After they cam and took me back to their ship, I looked around at the ship's pa sengers and not believing my eyes, I saw my child sitting dow with one of the men. I ran towards my child, embraced him an kissed him between his eyes. I said, "This, by Allāh ﷻ, is my dea child." The people on the ship began to look at me as if I were crazy woman, but I told them that I was perfectly sane, after whic I gave them an account of my story, concentrating on the event that led to the separation between me and my child.

Each one of them, as they heard me tell my story, had a look o amazement in their eyes. One of them said, "You have told us a amazing story indeed, and we too have a story that will amaz you. While we were travelling in the calm waters of the sea, a larg sea creature suddenly blocked our way, and on its back this child

was seated. From we know not where, a caller called out, saying, 'If you do not take this child from its back, you will be destroyed.' One of us climbed the back of the sea creature, picked up the child, and then took him back to the safety of the ship. As soon as our man returned to the ship with the child safely tucked in his arms, the sea creature plunged back down into the sea. We are truly amazed at what happened to us and at your story. We indeed make a pledge to Allāh ﷻ that, after this day, He will not see us disobeying Him." Each one of the crew members then repented for his past sins. How perfect Allāh ﷻ is indeed! He is indeed All-Knowing, All-Wise and Most Merciful.

The Opinion of a Woman saved the Army

The Mother of the Believers, Sayyidah Umme Salamah ﵂ was endowed with sound opinions and an intelligent mind, which were of great use on the day of Hudaibiyah. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ completed the affair of the agreement at Hudaibiyah, he said to his Companions, "Stand, slaughter (your sacrifice) and then shave your heads." Not a single person among them stood up, not even after the Holy Prophet ﷺ repeated his command three times. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ entered upon Sayyidah Umme Salamah ﵂ and mentioned to her the treatment he received from the people. He said, "The people have become destroyed." She said, "O Prophet of Allāh ﷺ, do you want that? Go out, then speak not a single word to anyone from them, until you slaughter

your sacrifice and then call your barber to shave your head." The Holy Prophet ﷺ went out, spoke to no one from them, until he performed both of those actions, he slaughtered his sacrifice and called his barber to shave his head. When the people saw that, they stood and slaughtered their sacrifices. Then they began to shave one another's heads, they were so miserable for having first disobeyed the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they almost hurt one another while shaving each other. That was the most sound opinion that Allāh ﷻ inspired to Sayyidah Umme Salamah ؓ and as a result, the problem was resolved and the Muslim Army was saved after having at first gone against the commands of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Provide your Children with a Well-Balanced Diet

Every mother is required to pay special care towards the children's diet. Any deficiency in their nourishment adversely affects their physical and mental well being. We see a number of kids who, inspite of hailing from affluent homes, appear lethargic and weak. On closer investigation we discovered that their mothers fed them with very delicious but non-nourishing food at the wrong time. The child's stomach will get full with such food but he is being deprived of a diet that would maintain his physical and mental well being. If you want the child to be alert and healthy, pay special attention to his diet. Do not just feed him anything. Prepare a feeding chart or schedule. Children who are overfed or fed haphazardly tend to be relatively overweight. These poor children are

then unable to jump, play and be energetic like other children of their age group. In fact, they tend to become mentally weak as well. Some mothers grumble that their financial condition does not allow them to buy nourishing food like almonds, pistachios etc. In response, we contend that you do not have to buy almonds, pistachios etc. There are a number of other types of nourishing foods. Dieticians have analysed that even peanuts and chickpeas are the equivalent of or even better than almonds.

Prepare a well balanced diet chart for your child. It is fairly simple to prepare one. If you stick to a planned schedule of a well balanced diet, Inshā-Allāh, this would contribute tremendously to his alertness and his mental and physical well being. He will play a meaningful role in society at large. If the food is wholly nutritional, the health of a physical body as well as the mind is maintained. Once the mind is healthy, its thoughts would also be healthy, the community will inevitably prosper. Corruption would be eliminated and a decent society will possibly come to pass.

So how pleasing it would be if each and every child received the officially recommended amount of nutritional food daily. Within the homes, this responsibility rests on the parents shoulders and upon the shoulders of the government in other establishments. The dilemma of malnourished children facing the world is a dilemma that needs to be resolved with all resources at our disposal.

Provide your Children a Good Breakfast

Generally, mothers do not give their children a very healthy breakfast. They regard tea and biscuits as an adequate meal. This does no good for the child's health. Such an inadequate meal will make him weak and affect his development. His body will lack the vital vitamins and calcium.

Therefore, an understanding mother with this intention that the child would grow up to be strong and healthy and through this he would spread the message of Deen to every point on the globe should feed her children a nutritional breakfast. For example, she may feed them with milk, eggs, fruit etc.

A famous Persian expression reveals, "A morsel in the morning is better than chicken and fish."

In other words, a little bit of food early in the morning is far better than thousands of other blessings. In our ancient form of medicine, a good breakfast was very strongly recommended because the whole day hinges on breakfast. If a person has a good nutritional breakfast, there would not be a problem even if he has a very light snack for lunch. Therefore we should feed our children and ourselves as well, according to our ability, with a good, wholesome and nutritional breakfast. Very starchy or oily foods are detrimental to the health. Fried food is harmful particularly to children who have to sit at school all day long. With the children's intense physical training, even these foods may digest rapidly (leaving them

hungry again). So avoid these foods for breakfast, prepare a daily breakfast menu that is both appetising as well as nutritious. Whilst preparing your menu, take into account the seasons as well. A half boiled egg is very appetising and beneficial to the health.

Add the juice of a freshly squeezed lemon to water (1/2 a lemon to a glass of water). Feed this juice to your children and you too should drink it.

This is very beneficial to the throat and the eyes. Similarly, carrots are good for the eyesight and it also increases the blood.

Apart from this, the primary ingredient of a good breakfast is cereal. Most homes do not even bother about it. Cereals are full of vitamins. Cereals are a good source of nutrition and their nutritional value is further increased when milk is added. Make cereals a must in your breakfast. The cereals need to be changed from time to time otherwise the child will get fed up eating the same cereal daily.

Important Advice on the Moral & Character Building of the Child

A Hadeeth states, "Among the gifts a father gives to his son, none is better than an excellent etiquette and good manner." (Tirmizi)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Treat children with kindness and give them good education." (Ibn Mājah)

It is the right of the children that their father provides them with a good education, gives them a good name, and fulfils their duties according to their age and intellectual growth. Train children to be truthful and trustworthy, stable and unselfish, helpful to the distressed, respectful to the elders and guests and polite to neighbours.

Eight Lies of a Mother

1. The story began when I was a child; I was a son of a poor family in Africa. We did not even have enough food. Whenever meal times came, mother would often give me her portion of rice. While she was removing her rice into my bowl, she would say, "Eat this rice, son. I'm not hungry". That was Mother's First Lie.

2. When I was growing up, my persevering mother gave her spare time to go fishing in a river near our house, she hoped that from the fish she caught, she could give me a little bit of nutritious food for my growth. After fishing, she would cook some fresh fish soup, which raised my appetite. While I was eating the soup, mother would sit beside me and eat the rest of the fish, which was still on the bone of the fish I had eaten. My heart was touched when I saw that. I then used my chopstick and gave the other fish to her. But she immediately refused and said, "Eat this fish, son. I don't really like fish." That was Mother's Second Lie.

3. Then, when I was in Junior High School to fund my studies mother went to an economic enterprise to bring some used match

boxes that would need to be stuck together. It gave her some money to cover our needs. As the winter came, I woke up from my sleep and looked at my mother who was still awake, supported by a little candlelight and with perseverance she would continue the work of sticking some used match boxes. I said, "Mother, go to sleep, it's late, tomorrow morning you still have to go to work." Mother smiled and said, "Go to sleep dear, I'm not tired." That was Mother's Third Lie.

4. The final term arrived. Mother asked for leave from work in order to accompany me. While the sun was starting to shine strongly, my persevering mother waited for me under the heat for several hours. As the bell rang, which indicated that the final exam had finished, mother immediately welcomed me and poured me a cup of tea that she had brought in a flask. Seeing my mother covered with perspiration, I at once gave her my cup and asked her to drink too. Mother said, "Drink, son. I'm not thirsty! "That was Mother's Fourth Lie.

5. After the death of my father due to illness, my poor mother had to play a role as a single parent. She had to fund our needs alone. Our family's life was more complicated. No days without suffering. Our family's condition was getting worse, a kind uncle who lived near our house assisted now and then. Our neighbours often advised my mother to marry again. But mother was stubborn and didn't take their advice; she said, "I don't need love." That was Mother's Fifth Lie.

6. After I had finished my studies and got a job, it was the time for my old mother to retire. But she didn't want to; she would go to the market place every morning, just to sell some vegetables to fulfil her needs. I, who worked in another city, often sent her some money to help her, in fulfilling her needs, but she would not accept the money. At times, she even sent the money back to me. She said, "I have enough money." That was Mother's Sixth Lie.

7. After graduating with a Bachelors Degree, I then continued to do a Master's Degree. It was funded by a company through a scholarship program, from a famous University in America. I finally worked in the company. With a good salary, I intended to bring my mother to enjoy her life in America. But my lovely mother didn't want to bother her son. She said to me, "I'm not use to it." That was Mother's Seventh Lie.

8. In her old age, mother got stomach cancer and had to be hospitalised. I, who lived miles away, across the ocean, went home to visit my dearest mother. She lay in weakness on her bed after having an operation. Mother, who looked so old, was staring at me in deep thought. She tried to spread her smile on her face but it was a noticeable effort. It was clear that the disease had weakened mother's body. She looked so frail and weak. I stared at my mother with tears flowing. My heart was hurt, so hurt, seeing my mother in that condition. But mother with the little strength she had, said, "Don't cry, my dear. I'm not in pain." That was Mother's Eighth Lie. After saying her eighth lie, my Dearest Mother closed her eyes forever.

For what Sin was she Murdered?

It is related that when a man from the Holy Prophet's Companions ﷺ fell into a continual state of depression, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him, "What is wrong with you that you are sad?" He said, "O' Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, during the Days of Ignorance, I indeed perpetrated a sin so great, I fear that Allāh ﷻ will not forgive me." The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Inform me about your sin." He said, "O' Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, I was from those who killed their daughters." He continued, "Then a daughter was born to me, and my wife interceded on her behalf, pleading with me that I should leave her alone, and so I left her until she grew up and became of age.

She became one of the most beautiful of women and many proposed to her. I was overcome by a fit of fanaticism and my heart could bear neither to marry her off nor to leave her in the house without a husband. So I said to my wife, 'I want to go to such and such tribe to visit my relatives, so send her with me.' She was pleased with that (arrangement) and she then adorned her with nice clothing and jewellery. She took many promises from me that I should not be treacherous with her. I took her to a well, and she sensed that I wanted to throw her inside, so she hugged me, crying and saying, 'My father, what do you wish to do to me?' I had mercy on her then, but when I looked into the well, I was again overcome by a fit of fanaticism. She hugged me and said, 'My father, do not waste the trust of my mother.' I began to look once at the well, then once at her, at which time I

had mercy on her, but the Shaytān overcame me (in the end) and I took her and threw her upside down into the well. She was calling from the well, 'O' my father, you have killed me.' I remained there until her voice broke off, and I then returned."

The Holy Prophet ﷺ, as well as his Companions ﷺ cried and he said, "Had I been ordered to punish anyone for what they did during the days of ignorance, I would have punished you!"

The Generosity of Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﷺ

Rarely throughout history has anyone possessed the generosity that Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﷺ was blessed with. Two similar examples highlight that quality. On one occasion, Sayyidunā Mu'āwiyah ﷺ sent 1,000 Dirhams to her and on another, Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Zubair ﷺ sent her a similar amount. On both occasions, she could not even wait until nightfall before distributing the money to the poor and needy. And on both occasions, she neglected to keep anything for herself or for her servants. After she finished distributing the money that Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Zubair ﷺ had sent to her, one of her servants came to her and said, "O Mother of the Believers, were you not able to save a single Dirham (from that amount), so that you can buy meat for us?" Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﷺ answered, "Do not be harsh with me. Had you reminded me, I would have done so."

Have you packed your Suitcases?

Her cheeks were worn and sunken and her skin hugged her bones. That didn't stop her though, you could never catch her not reciting the Holy Qur'ān. Always busy in her personal prayer room which dad had set up for her. Bowing, prostrating, raising her hands in prayers. That was the way she was from dawn to sunset and back again, boredom was for others.

As for me, I craved nothing more than fashion magazines and novels. I treated myself all the time to videos until those trips to the rental place became my trademark. As they say, when something becomes habit people tend to distinguish you by it. I was negligent in my responsibilities and laziness characterised my Salāh.

One night I turned the video off after a marathon three hours of watching. The Adhān softly rose in that quiet night. I slipped peacefully into my blanket. Her voice echoed from her prayer room. "Yes, would you like anything Noorah?"

With a sharp needle she stoopped my plans. "Don't sleep before you pray Fajr!" Argh!! there's still an hour before Fajr, that was only the first Adhān! With those loving pinches of hers, she called me closer. She was always like that, even before the fierce sickness shook her spirit and shut her in bed. "Hanah, can you come and sit beside me?"

I could never refuse any of her requests; you could touch the purity and sincerity. "Yes, Noorah?"

"Please sit here." "Okay, I'm sitting." "What's on your mind?" With the sweetest of voice she began reciting, **"Everyone**

had mercy on her, but the Shaytān overcame me (in the end) and I took her and threw her upside down into the well. She was calling from the well, 'O my father, you have killed me.' I remained there until her voice broke off, and I then returned."

The Holy Prophet ﷺ, as well as his Companions ﷺ cried and he said, "Had I been ordered to punish anyone for what they did during the days of ignorance, I would have punished you!"

The Generosity of Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﷺ

Rarely throughout history has anyone possessed the generosity that Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﷺ was blessed with. Two similar examples highlight that quality. On one occasion, Sayyidunā Mu'āwiyah ﷺ sent 1,000 Dirhams to her and on another, Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Zubair ﷺ sent her a similar amount. On both occasions, she could not even wait until nightfall before distributing the money to the poor and needy. And on both occasions, she neglected to keep anything for herself or for her servants. After she finished distributing the money that Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Zubair ﷺ had sent to her, one of her servants came to her and said, "O Mother of the Believers, were you not able to save a single Dirham (from that amount), so that you can buy meat for us?" Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﷺ answered, "Do not be harsh with me. Had you reminded me, I would have done so."

Have you packed your Suitcases?

Her cheeks were worn and sunken and her skin hugged her bones. That didn't stop her though, you could never catch her not reciting the Holy Qur'ān. Always busy in her personal prayer room which dad had set up for her. Bowing, prostrating, raising her hands in prayers. That was the way she was from dawn to sunset and back again, boredom was for others.

As for me, I craved nothing more than fashion magazines and novels. I treated myself all the time to videos until those trips to the rental place became my trademark. As they say, when something becomes habit people tend to distinguish you by it. I was negligent in my responsibilities and laziness characterised my Salāh.

One night I turned the video off after a marathon three hours of watching. The Adhān softly rose in that quiet night. I slipped peacefully into my blanket. Her voice echoed from her prayer room. "Yes, would you like anything Noorah?"

With a sharp needle she stoopped my plans. "Don't sleep before you pray Fajr!" Argh!! there's still an hour before Fajr, that was only the first Adhān! With those loving pinches of hers, she called me closer. She was always like that, even before the fierce sickness shook her spirit and shut her in bed. "Hanah, can you come and sit beside me?"

I could never refuse any of her requests; you could touch the purity and sincerity. "Yes, Noorah?"

"Please sit here." "Okay, I'm sitting." "What's on your mind?" With the sweetest of voice she began reciting, **"Everyone**

shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your full wages..." (3:185)

She stopped thoughtfully. Then she asked, "Do you believe in death?" "Of course I do."

"Do you believe that you shall be responsible for whatever you do, regardless of how small or large?"

"I do, but Allāh ﷻ is Forgiving and Merciful and I've got a long life waiting for me."

"Stop it Hanah, aren't you afraid of death and its abruptness? Look at Hind, she was younger than you but she died in a car accident. Death is age-blind and your age could never be a measure of when you shall die."

The darkness of the room filled my skin with fear. "I'm scared of the dark and now you made me scared of death, how am I supposed to go sleep now?" "Noorah, I thought you promised you'd go with us on vacation during the summer break?"

Her voice broke and her heart quivered. "I might be going on a long trip this year Hanah, but somewhere else. Maybe. All of our lives are in Allāh's ﷻ hands and we all belong to Him." My eyes welled and the tears slipped down both cheeks. I pondered at my sister's grizzly sickness, how the doctors had informed my father privately that there was not much hope that Noorah was going to outlive the disease. She wasn't told though. Who hinted it to her? Or was it that she could sense the truth.

"What are you thinking Hanah?" Her voice was sharp. "Do you think I am just saying this because I am sick? Uh-uh. In fact, I may live longer than people who are not sick. And you Hanah, how long are you going to live? Twenty years, maybe? Forty, then

what?" Through the dark she reached for my hand and squeezed gently. "There's no difference between us; we're all going to leave this world to live in Paradise or dwell in Hell."

Listen to the words of Allāh ﷻ, **"And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, he indeed is successful."** (3:185)

I left my sister's room dazed, her words ringing in my ears, "May Allāh ﷻ guide you Hanah, don't forget your prayer."

Eight o'clock in the morning, thumping on my door. I don't usually wake up at this time. Crying and confused; O Allāh ﷻ, what happened? Noorah's condition became critical after Fajr, they took her immediately to the hospital. Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'oon.

There wasn't going to be any trips this summer. It was written that I would spend summer at home.

After an eternity; it was one o'clock in the afternoon. Mother phoned the hospital. "Yes, you can come and see her now." Dad's voice had changed, mother could sense something had gone deadly wrong. We left immediately. Where was that avenue I used to travel and thought so short? Why was it so long now? Where was the cherished crowd traffic that would give me a chance to gaze left and right. Everyone just move out of our way. Mother was shaking her head in her hands crying as she made Du'ā for Noorah. We arrived at the hospital's main entrance.

One man was moaning, another was involved in an accident and a third's eyes were iced, you couldn't tell if he was alive or dead. We skipped stairs to Noorah's floor. She was in intensive care. The nurse approached us, "Let me take you to her." As we

walked down the aisles the nurse expressed how sweet a girl Noorah was. She reassured mother that Noorah's condition had become better than it was in the morning.

"Sorry, no more than one visitor at a time." This was the intensive care unit. Through the small window in the door and past the flurry of white robes I caught my sister's eyes. Mother was standing beside her. After two minutes, mother came out unable to control her crying. You may enter and say Salām to her on condition that you do not speak too long, they told me. Two minutes should be enough.

"How are you Noorah? You were fine last night sister, what happened?" We held hands, she squeezed harmlessly. "Even now, Alhamdulillāh, I'm doing fine."

"Alhamdulillāh, but your hands are so cold." I sat on her bedside and rested my fingers on her knee. She jerked it away. "Sorry, did I hurt you?" "No, it is just that I remembered Allāh's ﷻ words, **"And one leg will be joined with another leg (shrouded)." (75:29)**

"Hanah pray for me. I may be meeting the first Day of the Hereafter very soon. It is a long journey and I haven't prepared enough good deeds in my suitcase."

A tear escaped my eye and ran down my cheek at her words. I cried and she joined me. The room blurred away and left us two sisters to cry together. Flow of tears splashed down on my sister's palm which I held with both hands. Dad was now becoming more worried about me. I've never cried like that before.

At home and upstairs in my room, I watched the sun passing away with a sorrowful day. Silence mingled in our corridors. A

cousin came in my room, then another. The visitors were many and all the voices from downstairs stirred together. Only one thing was clear at that point ... Noorah had passed away!

I stopped distinguishing who came and who went. I couldn't remember what they said. O' Allāh, where was I? What was going on? I couldn't even cry anymore.

Later that week they told me what had happened. Dad had taken my hand to say goodbye to my sister for the last time, I had kissed Noorah's head. I remember only one thing though, seeing her spread on that bed, the bed that she was going to die on. I remember the verse she recited, **"And one leg will be joined with another leg (shrouded)."** (75:29)

"The drive will be on that Day to your Lord (Allāh)." (75:30)

I tiptoed into her prayer room that night. Staring at the quiet dressers and silenced mirrors, I treasured who it was that had shared my mother's stomach with me. Noorah was my twin sister. I remembered who I had swapped sorrows with. Who had comforted my rainy days. I remembered who had prayed for my guidance and who had spent so many tears for so many long nights telling me about death and accountability. May Allāh ﷻ save us all.

Tonight is Noorah's first night that she shall spend in her tomb. O' Allāh ﷻ have mercy on her and illuminate her grave. This was her Holy Qur'ān, her prayer mat and this was the spring coloured rose dress that she told me she would hide until she got married, the dress she wanted to keep just for her husband.

I remembered my sister and cried over all days that I had

lost. I prayed to Allāh ﷻ to keep her firm in her grave as she always liked to mention in her supplications. At that moment, I stopped. I asked myself, "What if it was I who had died? Where would I be moving on to?" Fear pressed me and the tears began all over again.

Allāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbar!

The Etiquette of Conversing with One's Husband

Whenever the youngest wife of Sayyidunā Abū Dardhā ﷺ related any Hadeeth from her husband, she would begin by saying, "My master narrated to me." The Arabic word "Sayyid" (translated as "master") is used to denote extreme respect. When the speaker attaches the word to himself/herself such as saying "Sayyidi" (my master) or "Sayyiduna" (our master), the phrase denotes love and admiration as well. When speaking with her husband, a wife should bear the following in mind:

1. She should listen attentively to what he says without speaking between his sentences. After he has spoken his piece, she may ask him something only to clarify what she does not understand. She should be silent when he is speaking because any doubts she has will most probably be explained during the course of his talk. By interrupting his speech, she may cause him to omit some important detail or to dwell on some unimportant subject.

If a wife needs to tell her husband to do something, she may tell him to do so without referring to what other men do. For example, instead of saying, "Why don't you take us out once a week like how my sister's husband does?" She should rather say, "We would really appreciate if you could take us out once a week."

2. When referring to her husband in conversations with others, a wife should not use the pronoun "he". She should refer to her husband as 'my husband' or by a title people use for him. She may also refer to him as someone's father e.g. "Muhammad's father", "Zainab's father" etc.

3. A wife should always speak softly with her husband. She should never allow anger to make her raise her voice when speaking to him.

4. She should refrain from interrogating him with words like "Why?" "What?" "When?" "What for?" etc. For example, she should never question him disrespectfully by saying, "Why have you come late?" or "Why do you shout at the children?" or "What on earth did you do that for?" or "We never know where you are. Why don't you ever tell us where you are off to?"

Instead of phrasing her questions like this, she should adorn them with sweet words and gentle tones so that his heart is softened and he will respond kindly to the questions. She will then have the answers she requires without hurting her husband. For example, instead of saying, "Why have you come late?", she should say, "We

waited a very long time for you to return. I cannot rest until you return. Neither the kids nor I could eat without you."

Similarly, instead of saying, "Why do you discipline the children like animals?" she should say, "You hit him very hard last night on his ear. Children sometimes lose their hearing when struck so hard. We should then not fall prey to Allāh's ﷻ wrath." She may also say, "When children are beaten, they begin to regard their parents as oppressors. They start forming the idea in their minds that their parents hit them merely to vent their anger and have no feelings for them. They convince themselves that they will be hit whether they do right or wrong. Such children then become stubborn and disobedient. We should therefore exercise patience when the children misbehave. In this way, we will be greatly rewarded. It is things like this that make parenthood a most rewarding experience. Instead of beating them, we should try to reform them in other ways. They will soon realise the error of their ways and change their habits."

Similarly, instead of rebuking him for coming late, she should say, "I would be so happy if you could inform me exactly when you expect to return so that I could prepare myself beforehand and have things ready for you." Instead of ranting and raving about being unaware of his whereabouts, she should merely express her concern for his safety, telling him that she would feel at ease if he kept her informed about where he was.

Woman's Reflection on Leading Prayer

"Given my privilege as a woman, I only degrade myself by trying to be something I'm not and in all honesty I don't want to be a man. As women, we will never reach true liberation until we stop trying to mimic men and value the beauty in our own God-given distinctiveness."

On March 18 2005, Amina Wadud led the first female-led Jumu'ah (Friday) prayer. On that day women took a huge step towards being more like men. But, did we come closer to actualising our God given liberation? I don't think so.

What we so often forget is that God has honoured the woman by giving her value in relation to God not in relation to men. But as modern day feminism erases God from the scene, there is no standard left but men. As a result the modern day feminist is forced to find her value in relation to a man. And in so doing she has accepted a false assumption. She has accepted that man is the standard, and thus a woman can never be a full human being until she becomes just like a man.

When a man cut his hair short, she wanted to cut her hair short. When a man joined the army, she wanted to join the army. She wanted these things for no other reason than because the 'standard' had it. What she didn't recognise was that God dignifies

both men and women in their distinctiveness not their sameness And on March 18, Muslim women made the very same mistake.

For 1400 years there has been a consensus of the scholars that men are to lead prayer. As a Muslim woman, why does this matter? The one who leads prayer is not spiritually superior in any way. Something is not better just because a man does it. And leading prayer is not better, just because it's leading.

Had it been the role of women or had it been more divine, why didn't the Holy Prophet ﷺ ask Sayyidah Ā'ishah, Khadeejah or Fātimah ؓ the greatest women of all time to lead? These women were promised Heaven and yet they never lead the prayer. But now for the first time in 1400 years, we look at a man leading prayer and we think, 'that's not fair.' We think so although God has given no special privilege to the one who leads. The Imām is no higher in the eyes of God than the one who prays behind.

On the other hand, only a woman can be a mother. And God has given special privilege to a mother. The Holy Prophet ﷺ taught us that Heaven lies at the feet of mothers. But no matter what a man does he can never be a mother. So why is that not unfair?

When asked who is most deserving of our kind treatment? The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied, "your mother" three times before saying "your father" only once. Isn't that sexist? No matter what a man does he will never be able to have the status of a mother. And yet even when God honours us with something uniquely feminine, we are too busy trying to find our worth in reference to men, to value

it or even notice it. We too have accepted men as the standard; so anything uniquely feminine is, by definition, inferior. Being sensitive is an insult, becoming a mother, a degradation.

In the battle between rationality (considered masculine) and selfless compassion (considered feminine), rationality reigns supreme. As soon as we accept that everything a man has and does is better, all that follows is just a knee jerk reaction: if men have it, we want it too. If men pray in the front rows, we assume this is better, so we want to pray in the front rows too. If men lead prayer, we assume that the Imām is closer to God, so we want to lead prayer too. Somewhere along the line we've accepted the notion that having a position of worldly leadership is some indication of one's position with God.

A Muslim woman does not need to degrade herself in this way. She has God as a standard. She has God to give her value; she doesn't need a man. In fact, in our crusade to follow men, we as women, never even stopped to examine the possibility that what we have is better for us. In some cases we even gave up what was higher only to be like men.

Fifty years ago, society told us that men were superior because they left the home to work in factories. We were mothers and yet, we were told that it was women's liberation to abandon the raising of other human beings in order to work on a machine. We accepted that working in a factory was superior to raising the foundation of society just because a man did it.

Then after working, we were expected to be superhuman, the perfect mother, the perfect wife, the perfect homemaker and have the perfect career, and while there is nothing wrong, by definition, with a woman having a career, we soon came to realise what we had sacrificed by blindly mimicking men. We watched as our children became strangers and soon recognised the privilege we'd given up and so only now-given the choice-women in the West are choosing to stay home to raise their children.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, only 31 percent of mothers with babies, and 18 percent of mothers with two or more children, are working full-time. And of those working mothers, a survey conducted by Parenting Magazine in 2000, found that 93% of them say they would rather be home with their kids, but are compelled to work due to 'financial obligations'. These 'obligations' are imposed on women by the gender sameness of the modern West, and removed from women by the gender distinctiveness of Islām. It took women in the West almost a century of experimentation to realise a privilege given to Muslim women 1400 years ago.

If given a choice between rational justice and compassion, I choose compassion. And if given a choice between worldly leadership and Heaven at my feet - I choose Heaven.

Women Encouraged to offer Salāh at Home

Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Suwayd al-Ansāri ﷺ narrated that once his paternal aunt, Sayyidah Umme Humayd ﷺ, wife of Sayyidunā Abū Humayd Sā'idi ﷺ, went to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and submitted, "O Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, I wish that I could offer the Salāh with you." He replied, "I know that you wish to offer the Salāh with me but for you it is better to offer the Salāh in your (lower) room than offering it in an inside room of the house, and it is better to offer the Salāh in an inside room of the house than in any other room. To offer the Salāh in the house is better than offering it in the Masjid of your people and to offer the Salāh in the Masjid of your people is better than offering it in my Masjid." Thereafter, Sayyidah Umme Humayd ﷺ gave instructions that a place of worship should be built for her in the dark, lower portion of her room. She continued to offer her Salāh there till her death. (Ahmad)

Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﷺ narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "For a woman, it is better to offer the Salāh in her room than in an inside room of her house, and it is better (for her) to offer the Salāh in an inside room of the house than in any portion of the house. And it is better to offer the Salāh in any portion of the house than in a Masjid."

Marry Daughters to Pious Men

Sayyidunā Abū Hātim Muzani ﷺ narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "When a man comes to you whose habits and religiousness you like then get them married. If you do not do it then it will cause mischief on earth." The people asked him, "O Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, what if some other defect is found in the person?" He said again, "When a man comes to you whose habits and religiousness you like then get them married." And he spoke these words three times. (Tirmizi)

Sayyidunā Abū Hurairah ﷺ narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "When a man sends you a proposal for marriage and you like his habits and religiousness, then get him married (to your daughter). If you do not do it then there will be great mischief and corruption on earth." (Tirmizi, Ibn Mājah)

Aswad Ibn Abū Āmir ﷺ said that he asked Ibn Abū Laylā about equality between husband and wife. He said, "It is in being religious and rank and descent." He asked, "Do you mean wealth?" He said, "No!"

Imām Sha'bi ﷺ said, "He who marries his daughter to a sinner truly severs ties of relationship." This is because the husband will mistreat her and she will not be able to join ties of relationship with him.

Someone asked Imām Hasan al-Basri ﷺ, "I have a daughter for whom I get proposals of marriage, to whom should I marry?" He said, "Marry her to him who has fear of Allāh ﷻ in his heart, for, if

he loves her then he will honour her and if he hates her then he will not wrong her."

Sayyidunā Anas ﷺ narrated that Sayyidunā Abū Talhah ﷺ sent proposal for marriage to Sayyidah Umme Sulaym ﷺ. She replied, "I have no dislike for you and a man like you cannot be rejected, but you are a disbeliever. If you embrace Islām then that itself is my dowry and I ask you for nothing else." On receiving this reply, he embraced Islām and married Sayyidah Umme Sulaym ﷺ.

Abū Maleeh ﷺ narrated that a man asked Maymūn Ibn Mahrān ﷺ for the hand of his daughter. He said, "I do not like my daughter for you." The man asked for the reason and he said, "She has a liking for jewellery and clothes." He said, "I have what she likes." Maymūn ﷺ said, "Then I do not like you for her."

Marriage of the Daughter of Saeed Ibnul Musayyib ﷺ

Abū Bakr Ibn Abū Dāwood ﷺ narrated that Abdul Malik Ibn Marwān sought the daughter of Saeed Ibnul Musayyib ﷺ for his son Waleed, but he rejected the proposal. In retaliation, Abdul Malik did not cease to conspire against him and once during winter he gave him a hundred lashes, drenched him with water and made him wear a woollen robe.

One of the sub-narrators said that Ibn Abū Wadā'ah ﷺ narrated: I used to attend the gatherings of Saeed Ibnul Musayyib ﷺ but I could not attend for some days. When I resumed my attendance, he asked me. "Where were you?" I told him that my wife had died

and I could not come because of that.

He said, "You did not inform me otherwise I would have come to the funeral. Have you sought any other woman?" I said, "May Allāh ﷻ be merciful to you, who will marry me. I own only a couple of Dirhams." He said, "I will get you married." I asked him in wonder if he would really do it and he said, "Yes." Then he praised and glorified Allāh ﷻ, invoked blessings on the Holy Prophet ﷺ and married his daughter to me for a dowry of two or three Dirhams. I was so happy that I did not know what to do. I went home. I was fasting that day. I brought my meal for Iftār comprising barley bread and olive oil.

Suddenly there was a knock at my door. I asked, "Who is it?" I was told, "Saeed," and I thought of every Saeed I knew but not of Saeed Ibnul Musayyib ﷺ for, it had been forty years since he moved only between his house and the Masjid. I opened the door to find Saeed Ibnul Musayyib ﷺ and I imagined that he was told of something (and had come to withdraw the proposal). I submitted, "O Abū Muhammad, you may have summoned me and I would have come." He said, "No, you are more rightful that I should come to you. You were unmarried and I got you married, so I did not like that you should spend the night alone. So, here is your wife!" She was standing behind him in line with him. He took her hand and sent her inside and shut the door. The girl fell down out of shyness. I locked the door, put the bowl in the shade of the lantern that she might not see it. I went up to the roof and called my neighbours. They came out and asked if everything was okay. I related to them all that had happened. They came to her. My mother

too learnt of it and came to her and said to me, "It is forbidden to you to see my face if you touch her before I adorn her for three days." I waited for three days and when I met her, she was the most beautiful woman who knew the Holy Qur'ān more than anyone else and was aware of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ Sunnah more than others. She knew the rights of the husband better than anyone else. For a month, I did not go to Saeed Ibnul Musayyib ﷺ. When I went, he was in his circle. I offered the Salām and he gave the reply and did not talk to me till the gathering ended. When everyone left he said, "How is the daughter?" I said, "O Abū Muhammad, she is well. She is in a condition that friends like and enemies dislike." He said, "If you do not like anything of her then discipline her." When I returned home, he sent me twenty thousand Dirhams.

The Farmer's Daughter

A beautiful story about lateral and logical thinking

Many years ago in a small Indian village, a farmer called Ibrāheem had the misfortune of owing a large sum of money to a village moneylender. The moneylender, who was old and ugly, had a liking for the farmer's beautiful daughter Fātimah. So he proposed a bargain. He said he would forgo the farmer Ibrāheem's debt if he could marry his daughter, Fātimah. Both the farmer and his daughter were horrified by the proposal.

So the cunning moneylender suggested that they let destiny (fate)

decide the matter. He told them that he would put a black pebble and a white pebble into an empty money bag. Then the girl would have to pick one pebble from the bag.

1. If she picked the black pebble, she would become his wife and her father's debt would be forgiven.
2. If she picked the white pebble she need not marry him and her father's debt would still be forgiven.
3. But if she refused to pick a pebble, her father would be thrown into jail.

They were standing on a pebble-scattered path in the farmer's field. As they talked, the moneylender bent over to pick up two pebbles. As he picked them up, the sharp-eyed pious girl Fātimah noticed that he had picked up two black pebbles and put them into the bag. He then asked the girl Fātimah to pick a pebble from the bag.

Now, imagine that you were standing in the field. What would you have done if you were Fātimah? If you had to advise her, what would you have told her?

Careful analysis would produce three possibilities:

1. Fātimah should refuse to take a pebble.
2. Fātimah should show that there were two black pebbles in the bag and expose the moneylender as a cheat.
3. Fātimah should pick a black pebble and sacrifice herself in order to save her father Ibrāheem from his debt and imprisonment.

Take a moment to ponder over the story. The story is used with

the hope that it will make us appreciate the difference between lateral and logical thinking.

The girl's dilemma cannot be solved with traditional logical thinking. Think of the consequences if she chooses the above logical answers. What would you recommend to Fātimah to do?

Well, here is what she did. Being pious, she put her trust in Allāh ﷻ and said Bismillāh, she then put her hand into the moneybag and drew out a pebble. Without looking at it, she fumbled and let it fall onto the pebble-scattered path where it immediately became lost among all the other pebbles...

"Oh, how clumsy of me," Fātimah said. "But never mind, if you look into the bag for the one that is left, you will be able to tell which pebble I picked."

Since the remaining pebble is black, it must be assumed that she had picked the white one and since the moneylender dared not admit his dishonesty, the girl changed with Allāh's ﷻ help what seemed an impossible situation into an extremely advantageous one.

Moral: Most complex problems do have a solution. It is only that we don't attempt to think and trust in Allāh ﷻ. **"And when someone puts all his trust in Allāh, He will be enough for him." (65:3)**

The Most Just, the Most Merciful

It is related that a woman once went to Sayyidunā Dāwood ﷺ and asked, "O' Prophet of Allāh, is your Lord just or unjust?" Sayyidunā Dāwood ﷺ replied, "Woe unto you woman; indeed He is Most Just and never acts unjustly." He then asked her, "What is your story?"

She said, "I am a widow; I have three daughters, and I provide for them from what I spin with my needle and wool. Yesterday, I wrapped my yarn in a cloth and went with it to the marketplace, intending to sell it and use the proceeds to buy provisions for my children. But while I was walking to the marketplace, a bird suddenly swooped down and took my yarn and my cloth, after which it flew away. I sat there in a sad and miserable state, faced with the reality that I owned nothing that I could use to provide for my children."

As the woman was with Sayyidunā Dāwood ﷺ, telling him her story, someone knocked on the door, asking permission to enter. Ten men then entered; each one was a businessman and each one had 100 Dināars in his hand. They said, "O Prophet of Allāh, give this money to someone who is deserving of it." Sayyidunā Dāwood ﷺ asked, "What prompted you to bring this money here?"

They said, "O Prophet of Allāh, we were travelling in a sea vessel, when the waves began to roar fiercely and our ship began to sink. Then suddenly, as if out of nowhere, a bird came and dropped a

red cloth that contained wool inside of it. Using those materials, we quickly worked to repair the hole in the ship that was causing us to sink. Not much time passed before the winds and waves calmed down and the hole was repaired. We then made an oath to Allāh ﷻ that each one of us would give 100 Dināars in charity. This is that money, which you may give as charity to whomsoever you please." Turning to the woman, Sayyidunā Dāwood ﷺ said, "A Lord Who does business for you on land and in the sea, yet you make Him out to be unjust!" he gave her the entire 1,000 Dināars and said, "Spend it on your children."

The Ill-Used Cow

A mother asked her family doctor, "Why don't women of this generation find enough milk to breast-feed their children?" The doctor remained silent for a moment, and then said, "Imagine cows in the field that are constantly driven at high speeds. Each night, when they return to the barnyard, they will not be able to give enough milk; Madame, such is the state of mothers today."

Yes, such is the state of mothers today: a mother in these times leaves home in the morning just as men do, striving with all of her strength, persevering through the heat of the sun and through the cold of the winter, toiling either of her own accord or under coercion, because at the end of the month, she needs her pay.

How will the woman just described be able to find milk in her breasts in order to suckle her babies? Furthermore, how can she

find time to look after her children, to bestow upon them her love and to give them her full attention?

How are our children expected to be trained when their mothers are far away from them? Or to feel satisfied in that they are receiving compassion, especially when we consider that the only one to look after them is a baby sitter or a nanny?

Therefore we should not be surprised when we find that the mothers of today are not giving birth, or are not raising true men, men who aspire the greater aims of life, men who contribute greatly to the society. Today, we can only read about such men in books of history.

Ten Points to Maintain a Happy Marriage

Allāh ﷻ has made marriage such that it increases love between two individuals. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:
"We have not seen anything that creates love between two individuals such as marriage." (Ibn Mājah)

There are many ways of increasing love between the couple. Consider the following 10 points to maintain a happy marriage and control dispute.

1. **Fear Allāh ﷻ:** It was the noble practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to make the spouses aware of the fear of Allāh ﷻ before performing a Nikāh by reciting verses (An-Nisā, Al-Ahzāb, Al-Imrān) from the

Holy Qur'ān. All the verses are common in the message of Taqwa (fear of Allāh ﷻ). The husband and wife will be first committed to Allāh ﷻ before being committed to each other. There can be no doubt in the success of a marriage governed by the fear of Allāh ﷻ.

2. **Never be angry at the same time:** Anger is the root cause for all marital disputes. One Sahābi ؓ came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and sought some advice. The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied, "Control your anger." The same advice was rendered three times.

3. **If one has to win an argument, let it be the other:** The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever discards an argument despite being correct shall earn a palace in the centre of Paradise. (Mishkāt)

4. **Never shout at each other unless the house is on fire:** Luqmān ؑ while offering advice to his son said, **"And lower your voice for verily the most disliked voice is that of a donkey." (31:19)**

5. **If you have to criticize, do it lovingly:** The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "A Mu'min (believer) is a mirror for a Mu'min."
(Abū Dāwood)

6. **Never bring up mistakes of the past:** The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever conceals the faults of others, Allāh ﷻ shall conceal his faults on the Day of Judgement." (Mishkāt)

7. **Neglect the whole world rather than your marriage:** The Holy Prophet ﷺ confirmed the advice of Sayyidunā Salmān ؓ to Sayyidunā Abū Dardā ؓ for neglecting his wife. "Verily there is a right of your wife over you." (Nasai)

8. **Never sleep with an argument unsettled:** Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ﷺ resolved his dispute with his wife over feeding the guest before going to bed. (Bukhāri)

9. At least once everyday, express your gratitude to each other: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever does not show gratitude to the people, has not shown gratitude to Allāh ﷻ." (Abū Dāwood)

10. When you have done something wrong, be ready to admit it and ask for forgiveness: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "All the sons of Ādam ﷺ commit error, and the best of those who commit error are those who seek forgiveness." (Tirmizi)

Inculcate in Children the Habit of Reading

Children must be encouraged to develop an ability to ponder, to comprehend and to read. They must distinguish between knowledge and ignorance and realise the superiority of an Ālim (scholar) over an ignorant person. Mention the respect, virtues and status of the learned.

When children observe the esteem and high rank enjoyed by the Ulamā (scholars) and men of wisdom, and the deprivation and misfortune of the ignorant, they will be motivated to learn and study earnestly. When the high rewards of an Ālim is witnessed, learning and studying will be valued. Knowledge revives the heart and brightens the soul. It gives strength to the body, fights fear and shows humans the right path. It is a means of attaining high position in this world and as well as the next. An Ālim is compassion-

ate and distinguishes between the lawful and unlawful. Knowledge is the lender, action is its follower. It is the destiny of the fortunate. The unfortunate are deprived of it. Knowledge is peculiar to human beings. It was because of knowledge that Sayyidunā Ādam ﷺ enjoyed superiority over the angels. It is the duty of humans to put knowledge to use. Hasan Basri ﷺ is known to have said that if it was given a form, knowledge would be more beautiful than the sun, the moon and the stars.

A good way to arouse interest in advance learning is to organise competition for children. These competitions may be for speed reading, the number of books read during a certain period, and an examination held on the books studied or read. Children who do well should be rewarded and encouraged. This could also take the form of putting in a good word about them in the presence of other people.

Explain to children that reading for the sake of Allāh ﷻ is an Ibādah. Children should be provided an ideal atmosphere suitable for studies. They must be allowed peace and comfort in a well-lit, clean and ventilated place that protects them from heat and cold. They must have their materials at hand, including religious books. Children should realise that time is like a sword, if you do not cut with it, it will cut you. Duties and responsibilities are important. There is always more to learn, the unknown exceeds the known. Islām calls upon its adherent to put to proper use the time that is available to them. Islām expects us to attain what is beneficial. People must realise the importance of time. Parents must observe

the following measures for any programme of study to be successful. Children must:

- Use the knowledge that is obtained to propagate Islām and benefit Muslims.
- Commentate while studying and be attentive fully to what is read and heard. Underline in pencil the main points that one comes across so that it can be easily seen during a second reading. Jot down in the page margins the important issues that are found on that page.
- In a separate notebook, compile an index of the topics of interest.

The One who Deceives us is not from us

It was during the time when Sayyidunā Umar ﷺ was the Khaleefah that he was walking about to check on the condition of the people when he happened to hear a mother and a daughter having the following discussion:

Mother: Come on, dear daughter! Since when do you not listen to what I say?

Daughter: I accept everything you say, mother, but.....

Mother: But what? Don't you like what I am saying?

Daughter: It is not that mother, but what you are saying has been prohibited by the Ameerul Mu'mineen (leader of the Believers).

Mother: I am not telling you to do anything difficult. All you have to do is mix some water with the milk so that we may get a bigger profit when we sell it tomorrow. Do not be stubborn! No one will know.

Daughter: I am not being stubborn, mother. I always love to listen to you and to obey you but my heart will not allow me to commit a sin.

Mother: What are you afraid of? I will not tell anyone.

Daughter: I am not afraid of that. Had you been in the marketplace yesterday, you would have heard our just Khaleefah giving the order.

Mother: What frightening order did he give to stop you from mixing water in the milk?

Daughter: Dear mother! Every order he gives is an order of the Deen. He was prohibiting us from deceiving people and we must listen to our Ameerul Mu'mineen.

Mother: You are in the house and Sayyidunā Umar ﷺ is in his house. He cannot see you here. Go ahead and mix some water with the milk.

Daughter: Dear mother! Even if he cannot see me, Allāh ﷻ Who is the Creator of the universe and Who is the Master of everyone, He never sleeps. He knows everything that moves and everything that does not and He sees everything. I swear by Allāh ﷻ that it is not possible for me to obey Sayyidunā Umar ؓ in the marketplace and then disobey him when I am at home.

As he heard all of this, Sayyidunā Umar ؓ was very pleased. He then went home and narrated the entire incident to his son and said, "I wish to marry you to this girl. His son accepted and the two were happily married.

Dear sisters! What a great wealth it is to be conscious and aware of Allāh ﷻ at all times! It is because of this that a person stays away from sins and from disobedience to Him. Like this, a person will follow the commands of the Deen and will have a good affect on other people as well. Other people will try to be like him and they will succeed in this world as well as in the next. We should be like perfume that spreads its fragrance all over. May Allāh ﷻ be pleased with us and grant us the best of both worlds.

Hilarious Hijāb

The author of this article "Observations on Hijāb" is unknown. Funny as it is, there are a number of lessons to be learnt...it has been my personal observation that some Muslim girls and women do not realise the significance of Hijāb. Hijāb is Arabic for protection and cover. Some people put a lot of effort into their Hijāb, yet it serves no purpose. I am referring to the pointless Hijāb that some

girls wear.

The first pointless Hijāb is referred to as the headband Hijāb. It is a band of fabric approximately four inches wide. It covers the back of the head and allows all the hair to be exposed. It doesn't serve much in terms of modesty, but at least it comes in handy in case of an unexpected tennis match!

The second pointless Hijāb is the Dupatta, also known as the Saran wrap Hijāb. It covers all the hair, but it is totally transparent, again it doesn't serve much in terms of modesty, but it keeps the hair nice and fresh!

The third type of Hijāb is known as the Micky Mouse Hijāb. It is when a girl wears a black scarf and tucks it behind her ear, so that her ears stick out!

We now move on to my favourites' - the yo-yo Hijābs: The first yo-yo Hijāb is the scarf that keeps falling down and needs to be constantly pulled back up....up, down, up, down, just like a yo-yo!

The second yo-yo Hijāb is also referred to as the convertible Hijāb. This type of Hijāb is predominant at any type of social event, i.e. an Aqeeqah, wedding, etc. This is when an Imām or Qāri comes up to the microphone and starts to recite the Holy Our'ān. At this point, all the convertible Hijābs come up...until he says, "Sadaq-Allāhul-Azeem." I'm not sure, but apparently in some cultures that translates to, "OK sisters you may take off your scarves."

Daughter: Dear mother! Even if he cannot see me, Allāh ﷻ Who is the Creator of the universe and Who is the Master of everyone, He never sleeps. He knows everything that moves and everything that does not and He sees everything. I swear by Allāh ﷻ that it is not possible for me to obey Sayyidunā Umar ؓ in the marketplace and then disobey him when I am at home.

As he heard all of this, Sayyidunā Umar ؓ was very pleased. He then went home and narrated the entire incident to his son and said, "I wish to marry you to this girl. His son accepted and the two were happily married.

Dear sisters! What a great wealth it is to be conscious and aware of Allāh ﷻ at all times! It is because of this that a person stays away from sins and from disobedience to Him. Like this, a person will follow the commands of the Deen and will have a good affect on other people as well. Other people will try to be like him and they will succeed in this world as well as in the next. We should be like perfume that spreads its fragrance all over. May Allāh ﷻ be pleased with us and grant us the best of both worlds.

Hilarious Hijāb

The author of this article "Observations on Hijāb" is unknown. Funny as it is, there are a number of lessons to be learnt...it has been my personal observation that some Muslim girls and women do not realise the significance of Hijāb. Hijāb is Arabic for protection and cover. Some people put a lot of effort into their Hijāb, yet it serves no purpose. I am referring to the pointless Hijāb that some

girls wear.

The first pointless Hijāb is referred to as the headband Hijāb. It is a band of fabric approximately four inches wide. It covers the back of the head and allows all the hair to be exposed. It doesn't serve much in terms of modesty, but at least it comes in handy in case of an unexpected tennis match!

The second pointless Hijāb is the Dupatta, also known as the Saran wrap Hijāb. It covers all the hair, but it is totally transparent, again it doesn't serve much in terms of modesty, but it keeps the hair nice and fresh!

The third type of Hijāb is known as the Micky Mouse Hijāb. It is when a girl wears a black scarf and tucks it behind her ear, so that her ears stick out!

We now move on to my favourites' - the yo-yo Hijābs: The first yo-yo Hijab is the scarf that keeps falling down and needs to be constantly pulled back up....up, down, up, down, just like a yo-yo!
The second yo-yo Hijāb is also referred to as the convertible Hijāb. This type of Hijāb is predominant at any type of social event, i.e. an Aqeeqah, wedding, etc. This is when an Imām or Qāri comes up to the microphone and starts to recite the Holy Our'ān. At this point, all the convertible Hijābs come up...until he says, "Sadaq-Allahul-Azeem." I'm not sure, but apparently in some cultures that translates to, "OK sisters you may take off your scarves."

And people should remember that Hijāb is not just a protection from guys, but from a girl's Nafs (ego) as well. It should prevent girls from having to spend hours in front of the mirror doing her hair. But unfortunately, you see girls in front of the mirror for hours doing their Hijāb as they would do their hair, with all sorts of elaborate braids. I wanted to go up to a sister and say, "Is your Hijāb naturally curly?" I also felt compelled to go up to another girl and say, "Pardon me, but is your Hijāb naturally that colour, or did you dye it?"

Well the point is that some people make an effort to wear Hijāb, but it is futile, because it is not fulfilling its purpose. It's like using an umbrella with holes in it. Hijāb is used for protection from guys as well as from the girl herself, and should not be used as an accessory or for beautifying one's self.

Anyway, that's it. If any one disagrees with me or is offended, then you are disagreeing with the teachings of Allāh ﷻ.

Tasbeehāt of Sayyidah Fātimah ؓ

Sayyidunā Ali ؓ once asked a student of his if he should narrate to him an incident regarding him and Sayyidah Fātimah ؓ, the most beloved daughter of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The student replied affirmatively.

He began, "She used to grind the mill with her own hands, which resulted in it leaving marks on her skin. She would also sweep the

house herself, which led to her clothes becoming soiled. Once some female slaves came into the possession of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and I told Fātimah ؓ to go to her father and request that he presents her one of them so that it may be a help for her in her work. She went to him. When she arrived in his presence, there was a small crowd of people with him, and owing to her modesty and humility, she turned back. She felt ashamed to ask her father in front of others, so she returned home. The next day, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ came to her and asked, "Fātimah, why did you come to me yesterday?" Out of shame, she remained silent.

I explained to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ her condition that her hands were chapped due to her grinding the mill, that her chest had marks of the rope due to her carrying the water-skin, and also that her clothes would become soiled due to her various domestic chores.

I told him that I sent her to his blessed presence the previous day to ask the services of one of the slaves which had come to him."

Sayyidah Fātimah ؓ told the Holy Prophet ﷺ, "O Rasūlullāh! Ali and I only own one bedding, which is the skin of a sheep. At night I spread it out for us to sleep on and in the morning I place fodder and seeds in it to feed the camels."

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "O my daughter, make Sabr! Prophet Moosā ؑ had only one cloak, which he would spread as a bed at night. Aspire for Taqwā and fear Allāh ﷻ. Fulfil your duties to Allāh ﷻ and continue your household chores. **When you retire to bed at night recite 33 times Subhān-Allāh, 33 times Alhamdulil-**

lāh ānd 34 times Allāhu Akbar. This is by far better than a slave." Sayyidah Fātimah ﷺ replied, "I am pleased with Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ." [Abū Dāwood]

That is, whatever Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger deem good for me, I accept wholeheartedly.

This was the life of the daughter of the king of both worlds! In the above-narrated Hadeeth these Tasbeehāt which are mentioned are to be read at bedtime. In other Ahādeeth, it is mentioned that after every Salāh, these Tasbeehāt are to be recited 33 times each.

Living Happily

A man and his wife were amidst a large celebration. All of their friends and family came to see the lovely ceremony and to partake of the festivities and celebrations.

A few months later, the wife came to the husband with a proposal. "I read in a book, a while ago, about how we can strengthen our marriage," she offered.

"Each of us will write a list of the things that we find a bit annoying about the other person. Then, we can talk about how we can fix them together and make our lives happier together."

The husband agreed. So each of them went to a separate room in the house and thought of the things that annoyed them about the other. They thought about this question for the rest of the day and

wrote down what they came up with.

The next morning at the breakfast table, they decided that they would go over their lists.

"I'll start," offered the wife. She took out her list. It had many items on it. Enough to fill 3 pages, in fact. As she started reading the list of the little annoyances, she noticed that tears were starting to appear in her husbands eyes.

"What's wrong?" she asked. "Nothing" the husband replied, "Keep reading your list."

The wife continued to read until she had read all three pages to her husband. She neatly placed her list on the table and folded her hands over the top of it. "Now, you read your list and then we'll talk about the things on both of our lists," she said happily.

Quietly the husband said, "I don't have anything on my list. I think that in imperfections, there are adjustments. You are "perfect" the way that you are. I don't want you to change anything for me. You are lovely and wonderful and I wouldn't want to try and change anything about you."

The wife, touched by his honesty and the depth of his love for her and his acceptance of her, turned her head and wept.

In Life, there are enough times when we are disappointed, depressed and annoyed. We don't really have to go looking for them.

We have a wonderful world that is full of beauty, light and prom-

ise. Why waste time in this world looking for the bad, disappoint-ing or annoying things when we can look around us, and see the wondrous things before us?

We are happiest when we see and praise the good and try our best to forego the mistakes of our spouse. Nobody's perfect but we can find 'perfection' in them to change the way we see them. It is necessary to understand the difficulties and be a helping hand to each other that brightens up the relationship.

Mother's Day is Everyday

When you were 1 year old, she fed you and bathed you. You thanked her by crying all night long.

When you were 2 years old, she taught you to walk. You thanked her by running away when she called.

When you were 3 years old, she made all your meals with love. You thanked her by tossing your plate on the floor.

When you were 4 years old, she gave you some crayons. You thanked her by colouring the dining room table.

When you were 5 years old, she dressed you for the holidays. You thanked her by running into the nearest pile of mud.

When you were 6 years old, she walked you to school. You

thanked her by screaming, "I'm not going!"

When you were 7 years old, she bought you a ball. You thanked her by throwing it through the next-door-neighbour's window.

When you were 8 years old, she handed you an ice-cream. You thanked her by dripping it all over her lap.

When you were 12 years old, she warned you not to watch the TV. You thanked her by watching it in your friend's house.

When you were 13, she suggested a haircut that was becoming. You thanked her by telling her she had no taste.

When you were 14, she paid for your Umrah trip with your father. You thanked her by forgetting to make even a single phone call.

When you were 15, she came home from work looking for a hug. You thanked her by having your room door locked.

When you were 16, she was expecting an important call. You thanked her by being on the phone all day.

When you were 17, she taught you how to drive her car. You thanked her by taking it away to every place you could.

When you were 18, she cried at your school graduation. You thanked her by staying out with your friends.

When you were 19, she paid for your university tuition fees, drove you to campus, carried your bags. You thanked her by saying good -bye outside the building so you wouldn't be embarrassed in front of your friends.

When you were 20, she asked whether you were seeing anyone. You thanked her by saying, "It's none of your business."

When you were 21, she suggested certain careers for your future. You thanked her by saying, "I don't want to be like you."

When you were 22, she hugged you at your graduation. You thanked her by asking whether she could pay for a trip to America.

When you were 23, she gave you furniture for your first apartment. You thanked her by telling your friends that it was ugly.

When you were 24, she arranged your marriage and asked about your plans for the future. You thanked her by glaring and growling, "Muuhh-ther, please!"

When you were 25, she helped to pay for your wedding, and she cried and told you how deeply she loved you. You thanked her by moving halfway across the country.

When you were 30, she called with some advice on the baby. You thanked her by telling her, "Things are different now."

When you were 35, she called you to remind you of a relative's need. You thanked her by saying you were, "Really busy right now."

When you were 40, she fell ill and needed you to take care of her. You thanked her by reading about the burden parents became to their children.

Then one day, she quietly closed her eyes. And everything you never did came crashing down like thunder…ah! If only.

If you are lucky and she's still around, make a difference for her and thank her everyday.

Inform the Women

Sayyidah Asmā ﵂ went to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said, "My mother and father be held ransom for you, O Messenger of Allāh ﷻ; indeed, there is no woman in the east or the west of our lands except that her opinion is similar to mine. Indeed, Allāh ﷻ has sent you to both men and women. And we have believed in you and Allāh ﷻ, Who has sent you. As a group, we women are confined and limited; we take care of the affairs of your homes, we bear your children, we preserve your wealth, we are what you leave behind when you go on journeys, and we are your carers when you remain at home. And indeed, as a group, you men have been favoured with congregational prayer, with visiting the sick, with attending funerals, with Hajj and Umrah. Indeed when you go out to perform Hajj, to do business or simply to travel, we preserve your wealth for you and we raise your children for you. Furthermore,

we sew your garments for you, and we put food (i.e. meals) together for you. Then will we be partners with you in reward, Rasūlullāh ﷺ?"

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said to his Companions ؓ, "Have you heard any speech of a woman that is better than her speech, in terms of the good way in which she is asking about her religion?"

The Holy Prophet ﷺ addressed her, "Return, O woman, and inform the women that you left behind that for one of you to be a good wife to her husband, to avoid making him angry, and to do that which pleases him are equivalent to all of that (i.e. are equivalent to the rewards for all of the deeds you have mentioned)."

As Sayyidah Asmā ؓ turned to leave, she expressed her joy by praising Allāh ﷻ (saying Allāh ﷻ is the greatest) and by pronouncing the testimony of faith.

The World is full of Sons and Daughters like You and Me

I had a marvellous mother who loved me, sacrificed for me and helped me in every way possible. From childhood, through school and eventually marriage, my mother was always at my side.

When I needed help with my little ones, she was there for me. A few days ago, we buried this wonderful woman. Can you imagine

how I felt when I returned home and found this poem in her drawer.

The time is now
If you are ever going to love
Love me now while I can know
The sweet tender feelings
Which from true affection flow
Love me now while I am living
Do not wait until I am gone
And then when I am covered with dust
Sweet words said after I am gone
If you have tender thoughts of me
Please let me know now
If you wait until I am sleeping
There will be death between us
And I will not hear you then
So if you love me, even a little bit
Let me know while I am living
So that I can treasure it.

Now she is gone and I am sick with guilt because I never told her what she meant to me. Worse yet, I did not treat her as she deserved to be treated. I found time for everyone and everything else but I never made time for her.

It would have been easy to drop in for a cup of tea and a hug but my friends came first. Would any of them have done for me what my mother did?

I know the answer. When I called mum on the phone, I was always in a hurry. I feel ashamed when I think of the time I cut her off. I remember too, the times I could have included her and did not. The world is filled with sons, daughters and children like me. I hope they see themselves in this letter and realise from it.

Finders Keepers

A wise woman who was travelling in the mountains found a precious stone in a stream. The next day she met another traveller who was hungry, and the wise woman opened her bag to share her food. The hungry traveller saw the precious stone and asked the woman to give it to him. She did so without hesitation.

The traveller left, rejoicing in his good fortune. He knew the stone was worth enough to give him security for a lifetime. But a few days later he came back to return the stone to the wise woman. "I've been thinking," he said, "I know how valuable the stone is, but I give it back in the hope that you can give me something even more precious, **Give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me the stone."**

A Child's Plea

Dear Mum and Dad...

I know I'm still small and don't know so many things yet, but please don't treat me as if I am ignorant and don't understand anything that is going on.

Please remember that the view of the world in my eyes is very big.

You stop and think how you would feel if you were only one metre tall and could not see the top of the table or couldn't reach the door handle.

When I am frightened of a dog, or a motor car, please pick me up and comfort me.

I can only concentrate for a while at one thing. Lots of things last too long for me, like shopping, visiting or even eating and dressing sometimes.

My legs are a lot shorter than yours; please don't walk so fast when we go places. In any case I like to look and investigate things as I go along.

Could you be a little more patient when I find it difficult to accomplish a small task like fastening my buttons? You have had so many years of practicing. I am learning for the first time.

Big people get into such a hurry! You tell me so many things at once, "wash your hands, fetch the post, put on your shoes," I get so mixed up and cannot remember, why what's all the hurry about anyway?
Sometimes it would be nice if you talked to me, or explained why I had to do something when it was new to me. Sometimes you could just talk to me about anything. I would feel loved and part of my family.

Mum and dad. Please always love me, because I don't only need understanding and kindness, but I need all of your love very much.

Rocking with Me

There once was an elderly, unhappy woman in a hospital ward. She wouldn't speak to anyone or request anything. She merely existed rocking in her old rocking chair.

The old woman didn't have many visitors. But every so often, a concerned and wise young nurse would go into her room. She didn't try to speak or ask questions. She simply pulled up another rocking chair beside the old woman and rocked with her.
Weeks later, the old woman finally spoke.

"Thank you," she said. "Thank you for rocking with me."
All one may do is a simple action, which may look insignificant, but it speaks volumes which translate as: "I really care!"

Secrets of Happy Couples

Cultivate common interests
After the passion settles down, it's common to realise that you have a few interests in common. But don't minimise the importance of activities you can do together that you both enjoy. If common interests are not present, happy couples develop them. At the same time, be sure to cultivate interests of your own; this will make you more interesting to your partner and prevent you from appearing too dependent.

Walk together
Rather than one partner lagging or dragging behind the other, happy couples walk comfortably together, side by side. They know it's more important to be with their partner than to see the sights along the way.

Make trust and forgiveness your default mode
If and when they have a disagreement or argument, and if they can't resolve it, happy couples default to trusting and forgiving rather than distrusting and begrudging.

Focus more on what your partner does right than what he or she does wrong
If you look for things your partner does wrong, you can always find something. If you look for what he or she does right, you can always find something, too. It all depends on what you want to look for. Happy couples look for the positive.

Hug each other as soon as you see each other after work

Our skin has memory of "good touch" (loved), "bad touch" (abused) and "no touch" (neglected). Couples who say "As-Salāmu alaikum" with a hug keep their skin bathed in the "good touch," which can increase your spirit against anonymity in the world.

Say "I love you" and "Inshā-Allāh, may you have a good day," every morning

This is a great way to buy some patience and tolerance as the husband sets out each day to battle traffic jams, long lines and other annoyances.

Say "As-Salāmu alaikum" (may peace be with you) every night, regardless of how you feel

This tells your partner that regardless of how upset or depressed you are, you are still happy with one another. It says that what the couple have is bigger than any single upsetting incident.

Do a "weather" check during the day

Call your partner at home or at work to see how his or her day is going.

This is a great way to adjust expectations so that you're more in touch when you connect after work. For instance, if your partner is having an awful day, it might be unreasonable to expect him or her to be enthusiastic about something good that happened to you.

Be happy to be seen with your partner

Happy couples are pleased to be seen together.

Even if these actions don't come naturally, happy couples stick with them until they do become a part of their relationship.

I've Learned

I've learned that you cannot make someone love you. All you can do is be someone who can be loved. The rest is up to them.

I've learned that no matter how much I care, some people just don't care back.

I've learned that it takes years to build up trust, and only seconds to destroy it.

I've learned that it is not what you have in your life but who you have in your life that counts.

I've learned that you can get by on a charm for about fifteen minutes. After that, you'd better know something.

I've learned that you shouldn't compare yourself to the best others can do.

I've learned that you can do something in an instant that will give you heartache for life.

I've learned that it's taking me a long time to become the person I

want to be.

I've learned that you can keep going long after you think you can't.

I've learned that we are responsible for what we do, no matter how we feel.

I've learned that either you control your attitude or it controls you.

I've learned that sometimes the people you expect to kick you when your down will be the ones to help you get back up.

I've learned that maturity has more to do with what types of experiences you've had and what you've learned from them and less to do with how many years you've celebrated.

I've learned that no matter how good a friend is, they're going to hurt you every once in a while and you must forgive them for that.

I've learned that our background and circumstances may have influenced who we are, but we are responsible for who we become.

I've learned that just because two people argue, it doesn't mean they don't love each other and just because they don't argue, doesn't mean they do.

I've learned that even when you think you have no more to give,

when a friend cries out to you, you will find that strength to help.

I've learned that credentials on the wall do not make you a decent human being.

I've learned that the people you care about most in life are taken from you soon.

Story of Patience, Trials and Testing times

The Hijrah of Sayyidah Umme Salamah ﵂ and her husband was not as easy as they imagined. In fact it was a bitter and painful experience. We witness the fruits of making supplication at times of hardship and the results of trust in Allāh ﷻ.

Sayyidah Umme Salamah ﵂ narrates: When Sayyidunā Abū Salamah ﵁ (my husband) decided to leave for Madeenah, he prepared a camel for me, mounted me on it and placed our son Salamah on my lap. My husband then took the lead and went on without stopping or waiting for anyone. Before we were out of Makkah, some men from my clan stopped us and said to my husband, "Although you are free to do what you like with yourself, you have no power over your wife. She is our daughter. Do you expect us to allow you to take her away from us?"
Then they pounced on him and snatched me away from him. My husband's clan, Banū Abdul-Asad saw them taking both me and

my child and they became hot with rage.

"No! By Allāh ﷻ!" they shouted, "We shall not abandon the boy. He is our son and we have first claim over him."

They took him by the hand and pulled him away from me. Suddenly in the space of a few moments, I found myself alone and lonely. My husband headed for Madeenah by himself, and his clan had snatched my son away from me. My own clan, Banū Makhzūm overpowered me and forced me to stay with them.

From the day when my husband and my son were separated from me, I went out at noon everyday to that valley and sat at the spot where this tragedy occurred. I would recall those terrible moments and weep until night fell upon me.

I continued like this for a year or so until one day a man from Banū Umayyah passed by and saw my condition. He went back to my clan and said, "Why don't you free this poor woman? You have caused her husband and son to be taken away from her."
He went on trying to soften their hearts and play on their emotions. At last they said to me, "Go and join your husband if you wish."

But how could I go and join my husband in Madeenah and leave my son, my own flesh and blood, in Makkah among the Banū Abdul-Asad? How could I be free from anguish and my eyes be free from tears when I reach the place of Hijrah not knowing anything

of my little son left behind in Makkah?

Some realised what I was going through and their hearts went out to me. They petitioned Banū Abdul-Asad on my behalf and moved them to return my son.
I did not even want to linger in Makkah until I found someone to travel with me, and as I was afraid that something might happen that would delay or prevent me from reaching my husband. So I promptly got my camel ready, placed my son on my lap and left in the direction to Madeenah.

I had just about reached Tan'eem (about 3 miles from Makkah) when I met Uthmān Ibn Talha (he was a keeper of the Ka'bah in pre-Islamic times but was not yet a Muslim). "Where are you going, Bint Zād Ar-Raqeeb?" he asked. "I am going to my husband in Madeenah." "And there isn't anyone with you?" "No, by Allāh ﷻ! Except Allāh ﷻ and my little boy here," "By Allāh ﷻ! I shall never abandon you until you reach Madeenah," he vowed.

He then took the reins of my camel and led us on. I have, by Allāh ﷻ never met an Arab more generous and noble than he. When we reached to a resting place, he would make my camel kneel down, wait until I dismounted, lead the camel to a tree and tie it. He would then go to the shade of another tree. When we had rested he would get the camel ready and lead us on.

This he did everyday until we reached Madeenah. When we got to a village near Qubā (about two miles from Madeenah) belonging

to Banū Amr Ibn Awf, he said, "Your husband is in this village, enter it with the blessing of Allāh ﷻ." He turned back and headed for Makkah.

The lesson we draw from this story is that at times of hardships and testing times, if we keep patience and trust in Allāh ﷻ then the fruits of our forbearance will descend upon us. Just as it did on Sayyidah Umme Salamah ؓ, when after almost a year had passed in search of her husband and little boy she did not lose hope and continued her search for her loved ones. At the end they were reunited with the help of Allāh ﷻ.

Why Women Cry?

A little boy asked his mother, "Why are you crying?" "Because I need to," she said. "I don't understand," the little boy said. His mother just hugged him and said, "You never will."

Later the little boy asked his father, "Why does mother seem to cry for no reason?" "All women cry for no reason," his father answered carelessly.

The little boy still wondered why women cry, finally he asked an old wise Shaykh. "He surely knows the answer," he thought to himself.
"O Shaykh! Why do women cry so easily?"

The wise Shaykh answered, "When Allāh ﷻ made the woman she

had to be special. He made her shoulders strong enough to carry the weight of the world, yet gentle enough to give comfort. He gave her inner strength to endure both childbirth and the rejection that many times comes from her children. He gave her a toughness that allows her to keep going when everyone else gives up, and take care of her family through sickness and fatigue without complaining. He gave her sensitivity to love her children under any and all circumstances, even when her child hurts her badly. He gave her strength to carry her husband through his faults and fashioned her from his rib to protect his heart. He gave her wisdom to know a good husband never hurts his wife, but sometimes tests her strengths and her resolve to stand beside him unfaltering. And lastly He gave her a tear. This is hers and only hers exclusively to use whenever she needs it. She needs no reason, no explanation, it's hers. You see my son the beauty of a woman is not on the clothes she wears, the beauty of her face or the way she combs her hair. The beauty of a woman is her piety and must be seen in her eyes, because that is the doorway to her heart, the place where love resides."

Bend but don't Break!

One of my fondest memories as a child is going by the river and sitting idly on the bank. There I would enjoy the peace and quiet, watch the water rush downstream, and listen to the chirps of the birds and the rustling of leaves in the tree. I would also watch the bamboo trees bend under pressure from the wind and watch them, return gracefully to their upright or original position after the

to Banū Amr Ibn Awf, he said, "Your husband is in this village, enter it with the blessing of Allāh ﷻ." He turned back and headed for Makkah.

The lesson we draw from this story is that at times of hardships and testing times, if we keep patience and trust in Allāh ﷻ then the fruits of our forbearance will descend upon us. Just as it did on Sayyidah Umme Salamah ؓ, when after almost a year had passed in search of her husband and little boy she did not lose hope and continued her search for her loved ones. At the end they were reunited with the help of Allāh ﷻ.

Why Women Cry?

A little boy asked his mother, "Why are you crying?" "Because I need to," she said. "I don't understand," the little boy said. His mother just hugged him and said, "You never will."

Later the little boy asked his father, "Why does mother seem to cry for no reason?" "All women cry for no reason," his father answered carelessly.

The little boy still wondered why women cry, finally he asked an old wise Shaykh. "He surely knows the answer," he thought to himself.
"O Shaykh! Why do women cry so easily?"

The wise Shaykh answered, "When Allāh ﷻ made the woman she

had to be special. He made her shoulders strong enough to carry the weight of the world, yet gentle enough to give comfort. He gave her inner strength to endure both childbirth and the rejection that many times comes from her children. He gave her a toughness that allows her to keep going when everyone else gives up, and take care of her family through sickness and fatigue without complaining. He gave her sensitivity to love her children under any and all circumstances, even when her child hurts her badly. He gave her strength to carry her husband through his faults and fashioned her from his rib to protect his heart. He gave her wisdom to know a good husband never hurts his wife, but sometimes tests her strengths and her resolve to stand beside him unfaltering. And lastly He gave her a tear. This is hers and only hers exclusively to use whenever she needs it. She needs no reason, no explanation, it's hers. You see my son the beauty of a woman is not on the clothes she wears, the beauty of her face or the way she combs her hair. The beauty of a woman is her piety and must be seen in her eyes, because that is the doorway to her heart, the place where love resides."

Bend but don't Break!

One of my fondest memories as a child is going by the river and sitting idly on the bank. There I would enjoy the peace and quiet, watch the water rush downstream, and listen to the chirps of the birds and the rustling of leaves in the tree. I would also watch the bamboo trees bend under pressure from the wind and watch them, return gracefully to their upright or original position after the

wind had died down.

When I think about the bamboo trees ability to bounce back or return to its original position, the word resilience comes to mind. When used in reference to a person this word means ability to readily recover from shock, depression or any other situation that stretches the limits of a person's emotions.

Have you ever felt like you're about to snap? Have you ever felt like you're at breaking point? Thankfully, you have survived the experience to live to talk about it. During the experience you probably felt a mix of emotions that threatened your health. You felt emotionally drained, mentally exhausted and you most likely endured unpleasant physical symptoms.

Life is a mixture of good times and bad times, happy moments and unhappy moments. The next time you are experiencing one of those bad times or unhappy moments that take you close to breaking point then **bend but don't break**. Try your best to not let the situation get the best of you.
A measure of hope will take you through the unpleasant ordeal. With hope for a better tomorrow or a better situation, things may not be as bad as they seem to be. The unpleasant ordeal may be easier to deal with if the end result is worth having.

If the going gets really tough and you are at your breaking point, try to muster the resilience like the bamboo tree, bend but don't break.

Remember the verse:
"And certainly We will test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad-tidings to the patient ones." [2:155]

Reflections of a Mother

I gave birth to you, but cannot live for you. I can teach you things but cannot learn for you. I can give you directions, but cannot be there to lead you.

I can allow you freedom, but I cannot account you for it. I can teach you right and wrong, but cannot always decide for you.

I can buy you beautiful clothes but I cannot make you beautiful inside. I can offer you advice, but cannot accept it for you. I can give you love but not force it upon you. I can teach you to share, but cannot make you unselfish.

I can teach you respect, but cannot force you to show honour. I can advise you about friends but cannot choose them for you.

I can tell you facts of life but cannot build your reputation. I can warn you about drugs but cannot prevent you from using them. I can tell you about lofty goals, but cannot achieve them for you. I can teach you about kindness but I cannot force you to be gracious. I can warn you about sins, but I cannot make you moral. I can love

you with unconditional love all my life, and I always will....

Love Mum xXx

A Glass of Milk

One day a poor boy was selling goods door to door, to pay his way through school. He discovered he only had one pound and he was hungry.

He decided he would ask for a meal at the next house. However he lost his nerve when a lovely young woman opened the door. Instead of asking for a meal he asked for a drink of water.

The young lady thought he looked hungry; so she brought him a large glass of milk. He drank it slowly and asked, "How much do I owe you?" "You don't owe me anything," she replied, "Mother has always taught us never to accept payment for kindness." The boy said, "Then I thank you from the bottom of my heart."
As the little boy left that house, he not only felt stronger physically, but his faith in Allāh ﷻ became stronger. He had been ready to give up and quit, but continued.

Years later that young woman became critically ill. The local doctors were baffled. They sent her to the hospital, where they called a specialist to study her rare disease. Dr. Abdullāh was called in for consultation.

When he heard the name of the town she came from, a strange light filled his eyes. Immediately he rose and went down the hall

of the hospital to her room.
Dressed in his doctor's gown he went in to see her. He recognised her at once. He went back to the consultation determined to do his best to save her life within his capacity. From that day he gave special attention to the cause.

After a long struggle, the battle was won. Dr. Abdullāh requested the nurse to pass the final bill to him for approval.

He looked at it, then wrote something on the edge of the bill and sent it to her room. She feared to open it, for she was sure it would take the rest of her life to pay for it.

Finally she looked and something caught her attention on the side of the bill.
She read these words: "Paid in full with one glass of milk, signed Dr. Abdullāh."
Tears of joy filled her eyes, as her happy heart prayed:
"Thank you O' Allāh ﷻ the most Merciful of those who show mercy, that you spread your kindness and mercy through human hearts and minds!"

I'll be happy when...

We convince ourselves that life will be better after we get married, have a baby, then another. Then we are frustrated that the kids aren't old enough and we will become more content when they are.

After that we're frustrated that we have teenagers to deal with. We will certainly be happy when they are out of that stage.

We tell ourselves that our lives will be complete when our spouses gets his/her act together, when we get a nice car, when we are able to go on a nice vacation or when we retire. The truth is that there is no better time to be positive than right now! If not now, when? Your life will always be filled with challenges.
It's best to admit this to yourself and decide to be positive and motivated anyway...

So treasure every moment that you have and treasure it more because you shared it with someone special, special enough to spend your lifetime with. And remember that time waits for no one.
So, stop waiting until your home or car is paid off...

- Until you get a new home or car
- Until your kids leave the house
- Until you go back to school
- Until you finish school
- Until you lose 10kg
- Until you gain 10kg
- Until you get married
- Until you have kids
- Until you get a divorce
- Until you retire
- Until summer
- Until spring
- Until winter

- Until autumn
- Until you die

There is no better time than right NOW to be positive.
Happiness is a journey not a destination.

Sound Advice from a Wise Woman

There is a concise advise for my Muslim sisters which is amongst the best advice narrated from an Arab woman. This piece of advise was given by Umāmah bint al-Hārith ﷺ to her daughter Umme Iyās bint Awf on the night of her wedding. The advice was as follows:

"O my beloved daughter! You are about to leave the home in which you grew up, from where you first learned to walk to a place you do not know, to a companion with whom you are unfamiliar with. By marrying you, he has become a leader over you, so be like a servant to him and in return he will then become like a servant to you. Take from me ten qualities that will serve as a provision and a reminder for you:

1. Be content in his company, for contentment transpires peace of mind.
2. Listen and obey your husband, for in doing so it brings about the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ, the All-Glorious, All-Merciful.
3. Ensure you smell good (by applying fragrance) so that he should not smell anything but a pleasant smell from you.
4. To look good and appealing to him for he should not see any-

thing ugly in you.

5. Prepare his food on time for raging hunger is like a burning flame.
6. Maintain silence when he is a sleep for disturbing his sleep will make him angry.
7. Take care of the children (by bringing them up in the correct manner) for in doing so the children will show good management.
8. Look after his wealth for in doing so it shows that you appreciate him.
9. Never disclose any of his secrets because by doing this you will never feel safe from his possible betrayal.
10. Do not disobey him as this will transpire hatred towards you.

Be careful O' my beloved daughter of showing joy in front of him when he is upset and do not show sorrow in front of him when he is happy."

"Your happiness does not depend on anyone else, rather it is in your hands."

Not Just a Mum

A woman, renewing her driver's license at the office was asked by the female secretary to state her occupation. She hesitated, uncertain how to classify herself. "What I mean is," she explained, "Do you have a job, or are you just a...?

"Of course I have a job," snapped Bilqees. "I'm a mother!" "We

don't list 'mother' as an occupation, 'housewife' covers it," said the secretary empathetically.

I forgot all about her story until one day I found myself in the same situation, this time at our own town hall. The secretary was obviously a career woman, poised, efficient and possessed a high sounding title like, 'official interrogator' or 'town registrar.' "What is your occupation?" she probed.

What made me say it, I do not know... the words simply popped out, "I'm a research associate in the field of child development and human relations."

The secretary paused, ball point pen frozen in midair and looked up as though she had not heard right. I repeated the title slowly, emphasising the most significant words. Then I stared with wonder as my pronouncement was written in bold, black ink on the official questionnaire.

"May I ask?" said the secretary with new interest, "Just what do you do in your field?"

Coolly, without any trace of fluster in my voice, I heard myself reply, "I have a continuing program of research, (which mother doesn't), in the laboratory and in the field, (normally I would have said indoors and out). I'm working for my masters, (the whole family), and already have four credits, (all daughters). Of course, the job is one of the most demanding in humanities, (any mother

care to disagree?) and I often work 14 hours a day, (24 is more like it). But the job is more challenging than most of the run of the mill careers and the rewards are more of a satisfaction rather than just money."

There was an increasing note of respect in the clerks voice as she completed the form, stood up, and personally ushered me to the door.

As I drove in to our driveway, buoyed up by my glamorous new career, I was greeted by my lab assistants - ages 13, 7 and 3. Upstairs I could hear our new experimental model, (a 6 month old baby), in the child-development program, testing out a new vocal pattern.
I felt triumphant! I had scored a beat on bureaucracy! And I had gone on the official records as someone more distinguished and indispensable to mankind than "just another mother."
Motherhood! What a glorious career! Especially when there's a title on the door. Does this make grandmothers 'senior research associates in the field of child development and human relations?' and great grandmothers 'executive senior research associates?'.... I think so!!

Mother

As a blessing from Allāh ﷻ a child is born,
gifted into the arm of the mother,
her anguish finally withdrawn.

Nine months and nine days,
for our mother's how can we ever run
out of praise?

It is debt that can never be repaid,
a favour impossible to be weighed.

When a child cries a mother cannot rest,
inside her heart an ongoing tempest.

On her lips words of fear,
throughout the night her sleep will disappear.
She is in constant agony,
her tears pouring down like rain.

But when her child smiles,
it eradicates all her pain.

When her child laughs unimaginable the power,
that makes the mother's heart blossom
like a flower.

By listening to our mother's tender loving words,
we learn how to talk.

It is through our mother's piety of sight,
we are taught the differences between
right and wrong.

A mother loves her child loads,
tries her best to keep them happy gives them the best of clothes.

She may struggle but still provides
them with plates full of food,
takes on the challenge to make them
strong pious and shrewd.

Our mothers neglect their dreams to
fulfil our needs,
like a loving farmer, she makes fruits
out of barren seeds.
In return for all the striving to our mother's we lie,
are we unaware that Allâh ﷻ is viewing our actions?

We scold them when they make the
smallest of noises,
speak with huge bitterness in our voices.

We hit them with arrow like words always impolite,
what is the reason?

Why don't we treat them right?

Our mothers take care of us like we are
angels but it is a shame,
when they acquire a little help from us
we fail in returning the same.

Is it not our duty to support them when they are old weak and
lame?

We abandon our duties for materialistic pleasures,
are we not a disgrace?

Only Allâh ﷻ can see that their hearts are bursting with pain yet
not a trace of discomfort
appears on their faces.

It may not occur now but certainly
it will after we die,
Allāh ﷻ will punish those children who
made their mothers cry.

He punishes when a mother's values are defeated,
Allāh ﷻ is angered when a mother is mistreated.
Despite many sacrifices and many sleepless
nights with our mothers we deceit,
Why do we forget for children's heaven
dwells beneath our mother's feet?

Precious Pearl

Fame and popularity is undoubtedly an aspiration which every individual desire to achieve. Gaining the opportunity to be in the limelight increases every persons quality of life.

Ongoing for the past several years, till to date, we Muslim women have been subjected to the constant media attention. Wow! Media attention! Any and every human being would be considered very lucky to have grasped such a long standing attention. However, rather than being ecstatic on seeing ourselves at the core of attention, Muslims are deeply regretful at the way media representations of Muslims and in particular Muslim women have been conducted.

No freedom! No liberation! Oppression! Extremism! These are just a few of the intimidating remarks Muslim women are prone to hear on a daily basis.

My dear sisters, delve deep into your hearts. Do we understand oppression? Are we experiencing limited freedom?
Are we in actual fact in need of such sympathies, my sisters? Don't we take great pride in concealing ourselves?
Alhamdulillāh!!! The passion women have among themselves is surely derived from the acknowledgement that covering themselves is due to the fact that women are a fragile and precious art of Allāh's ﷻ creation. In order to preserve their value, they have no qualms in concealing themselves.
Compare a precious pearl with a piece of stone. You will be able to

find stones everywhere, dogs and cats trample over them. You will find children playing with stones.

But the pearl has a different life. It is at first hidden in a shell at the depth of the ocean thereafter it is kept in the treasury. No child is permitted to play with jewels. If pearls would be accessible as stones are, what would be the consequences? Indisputably, the value of a pearl would be drastically decreased and considered to be cheap.

"A woman's beauty is just like that of a pearl"

Islām safeguards women. In today's world, there is a concerning issue in relation to advertising and exploitation of females. The exploitation of females results in negative consequences for women, images of thin models appear daily on TV, magazines and advertisements etc.
It is as if women are being ruled into how they should keep their appearance. Are these women truly free in today's society? The constant bombardment by the media as to how the ideal woman should look and dress, testifies to this.
One can witness the beauty of Islām particularly in this case, how Islām has liberated women over 1400 years ago.

"Say to the **believing men that they should lower their gaze and** guard their **modesty; that will make for greater purity for them** and God is **well acquainted with all they do." [24:31]**

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has also assured the mothers, wives and

daughters of Islām a high rank and dignity which is not yet assured to women by the laws of the West.

Many women, who wear the Islamic attire, claim to have achieved utmost respect and security on the streets. Undoubtedly, Muslim women enjoy a level of protection and respect that is unheard of in the West.
My dear sisters, take assurance from the fact that we have certainly embraced a religion which appreciated women and acknowledges their value and worth.

We should be pleased to be identified as Muslim women. We are chaste, modest and pure women filled with dignity and self-esteem.

Muslimah

What can I say about sisters that you should know already? A woman's status is far greater than can be described with mere words for she is a mother, grandmother or daughter, a sister, an aunt, a wife and a companion. She is her child's support, confidante, friend and teacher. She is her parent's joy and the coolness of their eyes. She is her husband's closest and most precious companion. Her characteristics are as the rib, strong yet delicate and fragile. She provides protection for the most delicate organ of man his heart. She was not taken from his feet to be beneath him, nor was she taken from his head to be above him, but rather she was taken from his side to stand beside him and to be held close to him.

Women often feel unappreciated for their efforts towards their families, but sisters, your sacrifices will never go unrewarded. Allāh ﷻ is Al-Aleem, the All-Knowing and He is Ar-Raheem, the Merciful. Allāh ﷻ sees the deeds you do, those acts that are not obligatory but you continue to do them daily for the comfort of your parents and/or husband and it is He who will grant you the best rewards.

A mother's love for her child drives her to do everything for him, to provide him with the very best of which she can afford, to instil in him the best characteristics and morals. However the difficulties she endures to do so are numerous. For nine months, she carries her child in her womb and despite the pain of labour, just seeing the child makes her own face radiant with happiness. And for some, her child is taken before her and though her heart is torn, she is patient and shows gratitude in all circumstances. And for others, her child is ill, disabled or at the brink of death, yet despite her grief at her child's suffering, she too is patient and wise and she knows that Allāh ﷻ will listen to her pleas and give her what is best for her, so she prays. Some cannot bear children so they live with an overwhelming desire for something that has not been destined for them but forever they stand in front of their Lord with hope and in contemplation. Giving the child the right upbringing also entails many hardships but sisters, when you experience hardships, Allāh ﷻ wishes only to test you in order to strengthen you and for the opportunity to reward you. Your struggle is often within the home or within society but therein also lies your guarantee to Paradise. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "The woman who per-

daughters of Islām a high rank and dignity which is not yet assured to women by the laws of the West.

Many women, who wear the Islamic attire, claim to have achieved utmost respect and security on the streets. Undoubtedly, Muslim women enjoy a level of protection and respect that is unheard of in the West.
My dear sisters, take assurance from the fact that we have certainly embraced a religion which appreciated women and acknowledges their value and worth.

We should be pleased to be identified as Muslim women. We are chaste, modest and pure women filled with dignity and self-esteem.

Muslimah

What can I say about sisters that you should know already? A woman's status is far greater than can be described with mere words for she is a mother, grandmother or daughter, a sister, an aunt, a wife and a companion. She is her child's support, confidante, friend and teacher. She is her parent's joy and the coolness of their eyes. She is her husband's closest and most precious companion. Her characteristics are as the rib, strong yet delicate and fragile. She provides protection for the most delicate organ of man his heart. She was not taken from his feet to be beneath him, nor was she taken from his head to be above him, but rather she was taken from his side to stand beside him and to be held close to him.

Women often feel unappreciated for their efforts towards their families, but sisters, your sacrifices will never go unrewarded. Allāh ﷻ is Al-Aleem, the All-Knowing and He is Ar-Raheem, the Merciful. Allāh ﷻ sees the deeds you do, those acts that are not obligatory but you continue to do them daily for the comfort of your parents and/or husband and it is He who will grant you the best rewards.

A mother's love for her child drives her to do everything for him, to provide him with the very best of which she can afford, to instil in him the best characteristics and morals. However the difficulties she endures to do so are numerous. For nine months, she carries her child in her womb and despite the pain of labour, just seeing the child makes her own face radiant with happiness. And for some, her child is taken before her and though her heart is torn, she is patient and shows gratitude in all circumstances. And for others, her child is ill, disabled or at the brink of death, yet despite her grief at her child's suffering, she too is patient and wise and she knows that Allāh ﷻ will listen to her pleas and give her what is best for her, so she prays. Some cannot bear children so they live with an overwhelming desire for something that has not been destined for them but forever they stand in front of their Lord with hope and in contemplation. Giving the child the right upbringing also entails many hardships but sisters, when you experience hardships, Allāh ﷻ wishes only to test you in order to strengthen you and for the opportunity to reward you. Your struggle is often within the home or within society but therein also lies your guarantee to Paradise. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "The woman who per-

forms her five times daily Salāh, keeps the fasts of Ramadhān, protects herself from evil acts and obeys her husband, has a choice to enter Heaven from whichever door she pleases."
You are the pearls and gems of this world. It is your presence which strengthens others around you. Remember the story of the first revelation, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ returned from Cave Hira, trembling after the divine experience, who did he seek the comfort of? He did not think to see anyone but his closest companion, his wife, Sayyidah Khadeejah رضي الله عنها. And it was she who became the first believer of Islām. Emotionally, men and women differ. It is the woman's emotions which should bring her closer to her Creator. It is due to her kind manners and beautiful characteristics that she is a role model and teacher for her child. It is due to her endless love that she is her husband's most beloved and precious companion.

If only I could stress the sheer importance you hold as a Muslim woman and describe the beauty which you have brought to the Dunya (world). Instead, I leave you with the words of Shaykh Abdullāh Adhami, "The word 'Shams' (sun) is feminine and 'Qamr' (moon) is masculine. The sun burns itself out to give light and life to everything around and the moon is 'Muneer' meaning it reflects the light. Within itself, it has no light, it radiates the brilliance of the sun. So when we shine as men, the implication is that we are reflecting the glorious light of our women."

An Islamic Upbringing

Children; you love them and they drive you crazy! Yet the role they play in our lives and in Deen is fundamental. For they are the future and it is through their understanding that Islām shall flourish. But the upbringing of children in today's society is no easy feat, what with the constant exposure to Fitnah, but it isn't impossible.

As the young grow, they emulate the way of those who are close to them. It's true! And it happens right in front of our eyes. From baby to toddler, they walk and talk as parents do, as their siblings and as their close relatives because they see and they learn. And it is from this age of their life that we must become a guiding light for our little ones. Whether you are a mother, father, brother or sister you are a role model and this child will love to be in your company, so put them in an Islamic environment. Show them the beauty of our creed.

From personal experience, as a big sister and aunt, Islamic Nasheeds are a big hit with all kids. I love to hear and sing along with all Arabic and English Nasheeds and the kids love to watch me making a fool of myself! Smiles and laughter encourage everyone, not just the young, to get involved and it might surprise to see how quickly they pick it up. After all, if children can learn their ABC's, why not the Arabic alphabet? It is a known fact that learning becomes more difficult the older you get and this is often the case for those who did not learn to read Arabic when they were younger.

This results in not being able to recite the Holy Qur'ān, a vital part of every Muslim's life.

Now, how about some storytelling? Set some time out. After everyone settles down perhaps and tell a tale. If from your own knowledge you can speak of the beautiful stories from the Holy Qur'ān, then go for it! If we 'grown ups' show an interest in the tales of the Prophets ﷺ then the little ones will too. Or if you would prefer to read from a book, then why not go into an Islamic Bookstore and the child can pick one out for him/ herself. Being part of a decision encourages people of all ages and it is no different for our youth. Almost all Islamic stores also include games which are not only educational but a lot of fun too. There are plenty to pick from and all the while, the youngsters will see the greatness of Islām and Inshā-Allāh build their love for it also. Remember what the Holy Prophet ﷺ said regarding three things which will continue to gain you rewards, even after death:

1. Sadaqah Jāriyah (continuous charity)
2. Beneficial knowledge
3. Pious children

These pious children are those who have knowledge of their religion and have faith in the One Who gives life and gives death. After your death, it is they who will pray for you, who will carry out good deeds with the intention that its reward goes to you. Create love, respect and obedience in your children by spending time with them and teaching them Deen for both your happiness and their own lies in faith. And the correct upbringing of your children

guarantees Paradise. In this way, the young are a blessing for us all and this is what we should remember; so that we may show gratitude to Allāh ﷻ and ensure patience at difficult times. Give children unconditional love, not by continuously pampering them but rather by showing concern for their well-being and happiness. Grant them attention and expose them to the Islām that we have around us. Take them to classes, Islamic lectures, events and charity functions. Have them listen to Quranic recitation and encourage them to recite themselves. Balance work and play, teach them the prayers and make Islām their way of life with love and motivation.

Remember, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "He is not of us who does not have mercy on young children, nor honour the elderly." Dress them in nice clothing but do not underestimate the intelligence of toddlers; if you do not instil humility and modesty at this age, it will be harder for them to accept a different lifestyle when they are much older; especially for young girls. If during their childhood, you allowed them to wear tight or revealing clothes; they will be unaccustomed to dressing in any other way. Thus, resulting in rebellion when it is the time for them to dress as Allāh ﷻ orders them to do.

Our children are our future. So give them the best start by giving them Islām right from the very beginning.

Women and Children

The important role of women is in changing their home and in changing the society and ultimately in changing the entire Um-

mah. I am going to talk about our mothers and our sisters, about their important role, because many Muslim women feel that they are less of a woman if they do not have a career compared to that woman who has a career, and that a lot of women who also feel that getting an additional pay cheque is more important than all of this, because traditionally the father is the one who would be out of the house all day and the mother would be the one who would teach the children at home, she would be the one who encourages them to acquire knowledge. But the sad thing is that both of them are now going out for work, so the children begin to have a lot of problems. From values that they don't have, from morals, from even the simple concept such as bonding; which is when the infant bonds with the mother, and if you study the books of psychology you will see what happens to the children who don't bond well with their mother during infancy.

Another negative thing is that the woman is told that '**your job is to cook and clean!**' See how derogatory they make it sound. That is not what we are saying. We are talking about raising scholars, the warriors of this Ummah, raising good Muslim men and women. But some women nowadays are proud that they can't cook. They boast and say, 'I can't cook' like it's a good thing. 'Māshā-Allāh! You're such a modern women now you don't know how to cook? You must be a very educated woman.' So many sisters cannot even sew on a button. If it comes off, then they boast 'I can't sew', not that there is any shame in knowing how to cook and sew!

The role of Muslim women when it comes to the Ummah is like the

role of the archers in the battle of Uhud. They were not in the forefront nor were they fighting in the thick of the action but they had the most important position, they guarded the army, and if they moved then the whole army would be uncovered and defeated. So they are the ones who are doing the great work, they are the ones who teach the children courage, honesty, truthfulness, patience, perseverance, kindness and confidence in themselves. They are the ones who will do that, not the babysitter and not the nursery school which will only teach them to sing nursery rhymes all day.

In the battle of Uhud when the archers left to get the spoils, the army was uncovered and defeated but the same thing when the women leave this important position to go out for the spoils i.e. the extra pay cheque, they leave the Ummah uncovered.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said to the women, "Take care of your home for that is your Jihād." [Mishkāt]

Look how important it is, you can't even compare the pay cheque to the reward you will get if your son becomes a great scholar or if your daughter learns the religion well and teaches it to other women.

We all know the story of Imām Mālik ﷺ when he was a young boy, he wanted to become a singer, and who was it that changed his mind? It was his mother! She started to encourage him to study the religion, and the things she would do; he was a young boy and she would dress him up like a young scholar and she would put a turban around him and she would walk him to the Masjid because he

was too young to go to Fajr Salāh in the dark.

Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal ﷺ, his father had passed away when he was young, so his mother raised him. And a man would say about Imām Ahmad ﷺ, "I used to see Ahmad Ibn Hanbal ﷺ stand for prayer at night when he was a boy." Where do you think he learnt this from? It was from his mother.

Hāfiz Ibn Hajar ﷺ, his sister who was well versed in language and poetry, was the one who got him interested in learning religion.

Imām Mālik's ﷺ daughter Layla, who memorised the book 'Al-Muwatta' so well that if one of the students made a mistake and the Imām ﷺ didn't catch the mistake, she would knock on the door because she would be listening, then the Imām ﷺ would tell them to repeat it and he would pay attention.

The daughter of the famous scholar, Saeed Ibnul Musayyib ﷺ, when her husband got dressed to go to the Halaqah (study circle), she asked, "Where are you going?" He replied, "To the Halaqah of your father Saeed." She said, "Sit down I'll tell you what my father Saeed says." That's how much knowledge she had.

But we do not need to go that far. How about if we start right at the beginning with Khadeejah ﷺ? Where would Islām be without Khadeejah ﷺ? Even before the Holy Prophet ﷺ became a Prophet, he would go and meditate in mount Hirā. Sometimes he would

stay there for a month, so she would send servants with food, and look at what instructions she would give them!

Because she knew her husband was dedicated to something, hence she would tell the servants to leave the food at the mouth of the cave, and then leave and not to walk in and distract him and tell him what is happening in the village. Also, remember the incident when the Holy Prophet ﷺ came back from the cave, he was afraid and said, "Zammilooni Zammilooni" meaning, "Cover me! Cover me!"

She covered the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and she was very wise so she waited for him to calm down, then she asked him what had happened.

If this was to happen to someone nowadays (and he has a wife who is not so wise) and he comes in whilst there is a calamity and says to her, "Cover me!" she would say, "What for?! What happened? No I'm not going to cover you until you tell me what happened!"

So now the person would have two calamities instead of one! Look at how Khadeejah ﷺ supported the Holy Prophet ﷺ financially and how she suffered alongside the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The way people belittle religion these days, it is unbelievable! People always ask these questions, "Do you study the Deen?" "Why do you want to become an Ālim when you grow up?!" They see it as a ridiculous thing. But the best thing is to study the Deen of

Allāh ﷻ, as that is our priority number one. But sadly this is something we cannot even fathom these days because we put studying the religion of Allāh ﷻ at the bottom.

There's a true story where a man had two sons. One of them wanted to become a doctor and the other wanted to study religion. So the father was very angry with the one that wanted to study religion and would always praise the one that wanted to become a doctor. Later on when the father became old and was ill, it was the son who studied the religion who took care of him. He would wash him and help him perform Wudhu (ablution), feed him, and stay by his side at night. And the one who became a doctor wouldn't even give him any attention. So only at his deathbed did the man realise that the Ālim was far greater in status than the doctor. We pray that people realise this before it's too late.

Imām Abū Yūsuf ﷺ was once sitting with the Khaleefah, Hāroon Rasheed. Hāroon Rasheed offered him to eat from the Falooda (a type of sweet dessert). Imām Abū Yūsuf ﷺ suddenly started to smile and so Hāroon Rasheed asked him, "Why are you smiling?" He replied, "I am smiling because of something which happened a long time ago. I was an orphan child and my mother used to send me to the craft-smith, but I used to escape and go and sit in the Halaqah (study circle) of Imām Abū Haneefah ﷺ, and so my mother would come and she wouldn't find me at the craft-smith, so she would yell at me and say, "Nothing has corrupted you but this man Abū Haneefah." And Imām Abū Haneefah ﷺ would say,

'Leave him, for I teach him the knowledge from which the kings will feed him the Falooda in his mouth."
[illegible] all happened after so many years, that is why when he was offered the Falooda, he smiled because he remembered what the Imām ﷺ had said.

How do the women react when the child wakes up on a Monday and says he doesn't want to go to school? Compare that to the Makhtab on Saturdays they would say, "It's his day off, he doesn't need to go."

How many women wake their children up for Fajr Salāh? They say, "How can we wake them up when they are sleeping?!" Well obviously they are going to be sleeping at 5am! What do you expect?

This is what we're talking about, where is the courage? Where is the Tarbiyah (upbringing)? Nowadays raising children has come down to two things; (1) Eat and (2) Put on your jacket!
The Tarbiyah nowadays, "Eat! Eat!" and "Put on your jacket" is pure logic. There is no living thing on the planet that will not eat when it needs to eat. Mothers need to understand that there is more to Tarbiyah than just this! Mothers need to understand that they have a special and a pivotal role. And if they are righteous, most likely they will have righteous children. Allāh ﷻ has given women the greatest position and the greatest role in this Ummah and that is being the backbone and strength of this Ummah.

There is a non-Muslim organisation in America that promotes housewives. They call it 'home maker'. Even this non-Muslim group realises the importance of taking care of the home. Hence, why shouldn't we as Muslims realise its importance?

A Couple's Conversation

Presented here a simple conversation of a Muslim couple which never took place in reality but just in an imaginary world, but it's worth reflecting upon.

Here it begins.... Ring! Ring!

Husband: As-salāmu alaikum warahmatullāhi wabarakātuh
Wife: Wa-alaikumus-salām wa-rahmatullāhi wabarakātuh.
Husband: How are you dear?
Wife: Looking into the mirror.....ummm... I'm pretty and fine! Alhamdulillāh. How about you?
Husband: Taking a bite of an apple.....hmm.... I'm healthy and delicious, dear. Shukrlillāh.
Husband: Dear, are you free there?
Wife: No, I'm not.
Husband: What? What are you doing then?
Wife: Doing nothing dear.
Husband: Aren't you free then?
Wife: No, not at all.
Husband: That's really strange. What do you mean? I'm really confused.

Wife: Come on dear! Think laterally. I'm not free because I'm precious and priceless.
Husband: [Burst out laughing] Dear, you are really funny and intelligent too! Māshā-Allāh! I'm really proud of you.
Wife: Thank you dear... after all whose wife am I?
Husband: Great! Well, dear I want to say to you two words right now.
Wife: Well, what are those dear?
Husband: I Love You.
Wife: Strange! Haha...aren't those three words?
Husband: No, not three, but only two.
Wife: That's amazing! Can you explain to me how?
Husband: Yes, I and You are considered as one. Aren't we?
Wife: Subhān-Allāh! You are really humorous and wise too. Māshā -Allāh! I'm really proud of you.
Husband: Thank you dear. After all, whose husband am I?
Wife: Of course mine, All praise be to Allāh Who made us each other's garments and instilled in us Love and Mercy.
Husband: Indeed! Glory be to him Who created us in pairs and showed us the Straight Path.

Lesson - **Humour is to speech, what salt is to food and love is to the heart what blood is to the body.**

There is a non-Muslim organisation in America that promotes housewives. They call it 'home maker'. Even this non-Muslim group realises the importance of taking care of the home. Hence, why shouldn't we as Muslims realise its importance?

A Couple's Conversation

Presented here a simple conversation of a Muslim couple which never took place in reality but just in an imaginary world, but it's worth reflecting upon.

Here it begins.... Ring! Ring!

Husband: As-salāmu alaikum warahmatullāhi wabarakātuh
Wife: Wa-alaikumus-salām wa-rahmatullāhi wabarakātuh.
Husband: How are you dear?
Wife: Looking into the mirror.....ummm... I'm pretty and fine! Alhamdulillāh. How about you?
Husband: Taking a bite of an apple.....hmm.... I'm healthy and delicious, dear. Shukrlillāh.
Husband: Dear, are you free there?
Wife: No, I'm not.
Husband: What? What are you doing then?
Wife: Doing nothing dear.
Husband: Aren't you free then?
Wife: No, not at all.
Husband: That's really strange. What do you mean? I'm really confused.

Wife: Come on dear! Think laterally. I'm not free because I'm precious and priceless.
Husband: [Burst out laughing] Dear, you are really funny and intelligent too! Māshā-Allāh! I'm really proud of you.
Wife: Thank you dear... after all whose wife am I?
Husband: Great! Well, dear I want to say to you two words right now.
Wife: Well, what are those dear?
Husband: I Love You.
Wife: Strange! Haha...aren't those three words?
Husband: No, not three, but only two.
Wife: That's amazing! Can you explain to me how?
Husband: Yes, I and You are considered as one. Aren't we?
Wife: Subhān-Allāh! You are really humorous and wise too. Māshā -Allāh! I'm really proud of you.
Husband: Thank you dear. After all, whose husband am I?
Wife: Of course mine, All praise be to Allāh Who made us each other's garments and instilled in us Love and Mercy.
Husband: Indeed! Glory be to him Who created us in pairs and showed us the Straight Path.

Lesson - **Humour is to speech, what salt is to food and love is to the heart what blood is to the body.**

Do you know what the Latest Gossip is?

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ

"Woe to every kind of scandal-monger and backbiter." [104:1]

Scandal-mongering: Talking or suggesting evil of men or women by word or indirect expressions or behaviour or mimicry or sarcasm or insult.

Backbiting: Belittle, diminish or dent a person's character behind his/her back. Even if the things suggested were true , if the motive is evil, it is still called backbiting.

Our beloved Prophet ﷺ said, "A Muslim should be a mirror to another Muslim." [Abū Dāwood]

What does this mean? Why mirror? What does a mirror do?

Whenever you need to look good, when you comb your hair, or when you want to see something on your face or body that you can't see directly, you go to your mirror.

A mirror is an object which shows what you really are, what you really look like, it doesn't alter or exaggerate the real you, you get to know how you really look. The mirror doesn't expose your imperfections to the outside world, once an image is made on the

mirror, the very next moment it's lost when the person moves away.

A Muslim verily should be like a mirror towards another Muslim, if you consider this Hadeeth in a broader way, every human being should be a mirror to another fellow human being.

But the reality is a bit different from what should be done ideally. In reality, most of the people are not mirrors, they're recorders, loud speakers, they are spam messages, they are adds, cut outs, posters and what not. In short they are scandal-mongers and backbiters, as explained under the translation of the verse in Sūrah Al-Humazah. Acts such as talking or suggesting evil of men or women by word or indirect subtle expressions, behaviour, mimicry, sarcasm, insult or backbiting are cursed by Allāh ﷻ. They are not cursed for no reason:

1] A person may have certain bad qualities in him/her, but instead of advising, if we insult him in public, pass sarcastic comments at him, or expose his mistakes to the community the chances that he would reform would be much less, he would not only develop anger and hatred for you, but he will also develop arrogance and an ego that would prevent him from reforming. He will be isolated and labelled as a bad person.

2] The person can be a clean person, a pure person, but the information we gather about them, though seemingly reliable, may in reality be an exaggerated or altered message, and then by acting

upon the information we mustered, we may even destroy the life of a good person by extending the destruction towards his/her pre or post marriage life. It can break proposals and it can take a marriage towards divorce.

By backbiting, people not only find new reasons to fight with each other, but it also distorts the image , reduces self esteem of the person who's subjected to it. It encourages another person, or many to fall into more Fitnah/sin.

Why do people gossip? Why do we have back biters?

Jealousy: If X is more talented than Y, or if X has better looks than Y, and if Y is a weak person. You have every reason to assume that Y would be jealous over X. In such situations, Y would try his best to defame, demoralise X either by exposing a fault of X, by amplifying a small issue related to X , or by creating a new controversy involving X.

The same thing can even be done to break bonds between two good friends, if the same Y is jealous about the bond between X and a person named Z, then Y can misuse a word or two spoken against Z by X at some point of his/her life.

Anger or Revenge: If Y is seeking vengeance from X, or if Y is angry over X for some reason, again the same mechanism can be efficiently used to defame the person, or to create chaos in that person's life and his family.

Unoccupied: This seems to be the most popular reason that has been almost embedded in certain people, being unoccupied has got nothing to do with the occupation of a person. You may have over heard your mother or aunt or granny talking to a member of their gossip gang through the phone.

The topics are totally irritating, you just wonder why they really even bother about others? They make mind jolting assumptions and accuse people with self defined charges. They just don't have a particular place to discuss these, weddings, funerals, shops, restaurants etc. anything is comfortable for them.

For Fun: There are also some who create stories, make fun of people behind their backs, merely for a laugh, but even such situations have a chance of transforming into very serious issues.

How do we reduce the effects of gossip, gossiping and backbiting?

1. By the potential victim being very careful about his/her character.
2. By double checking the information you get about another person, even though you may think it's a reliable source (as in Sūrah Hujurāt)
3. By occupying yourself in more fruitful things such as Dhikr, talking about religion, planting trees, watering plants etc.
4. By minding your own business and only interfering as a third person to another person's issue, when required.

5. By concentrating on our own character, on our deeds, so that we would be busy finding our faults rather than finding faults of others.

"O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion, indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). And fear Allāh, verily, Allāh is the One Who accepts repentance, Most-Merciful." [49:12]

"Those who love (to see) scandal broadcast among the Believers, will have a grievous penalty in this life and in the Hereafter; Allāh knows and you know not." [24:19]

You are what you Wear

Many of us women as well as men would not agree to this statement because we are in the misconception of thinking **"As long as Imān is in the heart it doesn't matter what you wear."**

There is a Hadeeth in which our beloved Prophet ﷺ said, "Modesty is a branch of faith." In another Hadeeth it is said, "Modesty is good in every respect."

From this it is clear that if we have Imān we should be modest and only the Islāmic dress signifies modesty. If we claim to love Allāh ﷻ and our beloved Prophet ﷺ we should not follow our vain desires anyway. We should submit ourselves to the will of Allāh ﷻ

and the ways of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Naturally when you love someone you do everything to make them happy.

Instead we have given up our identity as Muslims, yet we proudly call ourselves Muslims! It's a disgrace.

We have become victims of the aimless ever changing money making fashion world, which is highly cursed and disliked by Almighty Allāh ﷻ. Women have started to dress like men and men like women. It has become nearly impossible to distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims. There are some of us who make a little effort to cover our heads, whilst our clothes are tight fitting and revealing and our faces are plastered with make- up. Men are wearing trousers that seem to be getting shorter from the waist and longer from the legs revealing their undergarment, not to mention the matching jewellery and hair; one thing leading to another. We should feel utterly ashamed of ourselves.

Many of us may think what's the big deal? Its only clothes we are talking about? But we need to understand the depth of this issue. It is a tried and tested fact that our clothes have an influence on our behaviour. If we are dressed in immodest clothes, automatically without even realising it we start talking and acting immodestly and indulging in many evils, whereas if we are dressed in Islamic clothes, we tend to think twice before saying or doing anything inappropriate; it safeguards us from many sins and serves as a barrier.

The purpose of the Islamic dress is not to attract the wrong attention but to give Da'wah. As Muslims we should be an example to the world. Nobody is going to look in our hearts. It is our image which represents us; our image is a reflection of our character. We should be steadfast in our Deen; we should not be affected by the environment around us, rather we should have an effect on the environment we are in. We should be inviting people towards Allāh ﷻ at all times, by our speech, actions or simply by our appearance. Just by looking at us one should remember Allāh ﷻ, as this is the real purpose of our lives to practise Deen and also to give Da'wah to others.

We should ask ourselves why do we choose to dress the way we do? Is it for Allāh ﷻ? Or is it to show others?
The honest answer would be to attract the attention of others because it makes us feel good about ourselves; it gives us confidence and self esteem. The truth is that we achieve absolutely nothing other than fooling and degrading ourselves.

Our salvation only lies in following the teachings of Allāh ﷻ and His beloved Prophet ﷺ.
Consider that Allāh ﷻ has granted us respect and honour through the invaluable gift of Islām. Remember we will never gain respect by imitating others, especially those who oppose Allāh ﷻ and our beloved Prophet ﷺ.

Each and every Muslim is precious and they have been created for a special purpose. We should consider ourselves as diamonds. We

wouldn't leave diamonds lying around on the street! We would treasure them safely. Similarly, we should conceal ourselves in the Islamic dress as Allāh ﷻ has ordained.

Our success in this life and in the Hereafter is only in following the Deen. Any other lifestyle will lead to nothing but failure. We can make our choice today. Making a sacrifice for Deen is a sign that Imān has entered our hearts.

Disrespecting your Husband

Allāh ﷻ in His infinite wisdom and mercy, created the bonds of marriage as a permissible, enjoyable means of uniting two strangers to live with each other in love and peace. Theoretically this exists, but sadly the reality is that it isn't always maintained and many Muslim marriages are breaking down.

Everyone is demanding their rights and quote many verses and Hadeeth in support, but yet they fail to think from the other angle and neglect to fulfil others rights. When a situation becomes very black and white people forget the essence of Islām, justice, forgiveness and humility. These qualities are lost in an argument and so a cold war ensues between husband and wife.

Keeping in line with rights, the greatest right of a woman is to be treated with kindness, but on the other hand the greatest right a husband has over the wife is respect. Anger and displaying angry behaviour is a very disrespectful way of behaving with someone.

The purpose of the Islamic dress is not to attract the wrong attention but to give Da'wah. As Muslims we should be an example to the world. Nobody is going to look in our hearts. It is our image which represents us; our image is a reflection of our character. We should be steadfast in our Deen; we should not be affected by the environment around us, rather we should have an effect on the environment we are in. We should be inviting people towards Allāh ﷻ at all times, by our speech, actions or simply by our appearance. Just by looking at us one should remember Allāh ﷻ, as this is the real purpose of our lives to practise Deen and also to give Da'wah to others.

We should ask ourselves why do we choose to dress the way we do? Is it for Allāh ﷻ? Or is it to show others?
The honest answer would be to attract the attention of others because it makes us feel good about ourselves; it gives us confidence and self esteem. The truth is that we achieve absolutely nothing other than fooling and degrading ourselves.

Our salvation only lies in following the teachings of Allāh ﷻ and His beloved Prophet ﷺ.
Consider that Allāh ﷻ has granted us respect and honour through the invaluable gift of Islām. Remember we will never gain respect by imitating others, especially those who oppose Allāh ﷻ and our beloved Prophet ﷺ.

Each and every Muslim is precious and they have been created for a special purpose. We should consider ourselves as diamonds. We

wouldn't leave diamonds lying around on the street! We would treasure them safely. Similarly, we should conceal ourselves in the Islamic dress as Allāh ﷻ has ordained.

Our success in this life and in the Hereafter is only in following the Deen. Any other lifestyle will lead to nothing but failure. We can make our choice today. Making a sacrifice for Deen is a sign that Imān has entered our hearts.

Disrespecting your Husband

Allāh ﷻ in His infinite wisdom and mercy, created the bonds of marriage as a permissible, enjoyable means of uniting two strangers to live with each other in love and peace. Theoretically this exists, but sadly the reality is that it isn't always maintained and many Muslim marriages are breaking down.

Everyone is demanding their rights and quote many verses and Hadeeth in support, but yet they fail to think from the other angle and neglect to fulfil others rights. When a situation becomes very black and white people forget the essence of Islām, justice, forgiveness and humility. These qualities are lost in an argument and so a cold war ensues between husband and wife.

Keeping in line with rights, the greatest right of a woman is to be treated with kindness, but on the other hand the greatest right a husband has over the wife is respect. Anger and displaying angry behaviour is a very disrespectful way of behaving with someone.

Similarly provoking and angering the husband is tantamount to disrespect. Marital breakdown is usually a consequence of anger and acting upon anger in hastiness.

In order for a wife to respect her husband she must first understand and avoid factors that anger him. Anger manifests itself in different ways but it tends to have a deeper underlying cause. A wife must try to work out what the root cause of the anger is before any solutions can be reached. The following are a few reasons as to what can anger a husband, ranging from minor to major causes:

Hunger

Hunger can make someone very irritable and short tempered. A husband expects food to be ready when he comes home from work. This may seem insignificant, but if this happens regularly then it might be an indication of his displeasure at his wife's time management/organisational skills and lack of consideration.

Neglecting children and household duties

A wife may have commitments elsewhere, e.g. work, Da'wah activities, personal hobbies. As a result children or managing the household is neglected. This indicates that your husband may be displeased with your priorities and may want you to reassess your commitments.

Work and money problems

Finance can usually cause a huge strain on marriages, and the

pressure of being the breadwinner can take its toll. However if the wife is oblivious to the husbands situation and spends endlessly then this means she doesn't acknowledge his effort and is abusing his generosity. Alternately the husband may be having problems at work that he can't discuss with his wife, leading to feelings of inadequacy and fear of redundancy.

Family problem

He may be having problems with his own family which he can't tell you about, but which affect him deeply. Being in the dark will only make you question and misunderstand and it may anger him at your lack of sensitivity.

Mistreating someone he loves

You may not have showed good conduct or hurt someone who he loves and respects, such as his family members or close friends. Your words/actions may or may not have been intentional, but someone was hurt by it and informed your husband, thereby causing him hurt and anger.

Hurt him with previous words or actions

Maybe you had said or did something quite along time ago that really hurt him, but which he didn't mention at the time. Consequently he had let the issue grow and took his anger randomly out on you at a later point.

Making him feel inferior

You might be a very confident, successful person, who is good at

multitasking. If you are arrogant in your approach then this will convey through your words/actions that you have no need for him or be undermining his authority. This indicates your lack of gratefulness and recognition of his qualities and capabilities.

Committed a sin, or not doing Fardh duties

You may be committing a grave sin that your husband may or may not be aware of, but punishment is such that it can indirectly affect your marriage, particularly if a woman is unchaste. Alternately you may not be doing your Fardh obligations e.g. Salāh, not observing proper Hijāb or engaging in un-Islamic activities, music, dance and films etc.

Socialising and going out too much

Your husband might dislike who you socialise with or that you socialise too often. He may think that you are taking advantage of his leniency or that you are never available when he wants you to be. This may result in neglecting him and the household. Husbands have a sense of possessiveness so he might feel this is infringed if you go out so often.

Not fulfilling his desires

You may not be fulfilling his desire properly or refusing to do so altogether. This can lead to frustration and anger, as well as a cause for him to look elsewhere.

Not allowing him to spend sufficient time with his children or family

You have a problem with him spending significant amounts of time with the children or you deny him access to children (if separate), or you dislike him spending time with his own family or someone else he is close to.

These are only a few suggestions, there are of course many more which are unique to each marriage. Wives should bear the following advice in mind when trying to resolve a problem. Understand to the best of your ability what the problem is, accept where you have gone wrong even if it may be hard to. Have the most sincere of intentions to please Allāh ﷻ and your husband, do plenty of Nafl (optional Salāh), recite often and earnestly make Du'ā that Allāh ﷻ gives you patience and understanding. Pray that Allāh ﷻ reunites your hearts and brings you closer.

The Trickery of Shaytān

Like many people, I rarely contemplated how Shaytān influences my world, until a recent dream made me rethink my attitude.

I dreamt of a dwarfish; almost cartoon-like Shaytān, trying to enter my home in several different ways. These included through my window (I picked him up and removed him). Then, he climbed onto my back and attempted to enter through my front door. Failing that, he proceeded to enter my house by sneakily hiding behind my children.

All attempts were failures, but Shaytān was not disheartened. In fact, he tirelessly and happily continued to seek different ways to

enter my abode. I woke up as he was assessing the barriers outside my (poorly constructed) home.

The dream, although troubling, was revealing. It prompted me to analyse my life, and consider ways in which Shaytān may enter and become a regular visitor in my home. The following are some of the prominent routes.

Company

Shaytān can easily walk into our homes through the wrong people we interact with. Is your home a gathering for bad company? Or is it a place of beneficial talk and good friends? People develop the traits and characteristics of those around them, usually within a few weeks, so ensure your influences are favourable.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "A person is likely to follow the faith of his friend, so look whom you befriend." (Abū Dāwood, Tirmizi)

When good company adorns our homes, they will at least leave a pleasant feeling. A good friend guides us towards Allāh's ﷻ pleasure, and dissuades us from Harām activities. In contrast, the wrong company will only lead you to Shaytān.

If Shaytān can enter your home on the back of bad friends, then he will not miss this opportunity to drag you to Hell with him.

Creature Comforts

Like many women, I am very house proud, and spend a great deal

of energy cleaning and decorating my home. My house is dressed with useless ornaments but it is not an environment that nurtures faith and worship.

Despite all my efforts, I don't feel content in my home, as I don't adorn it with the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. Thus, if my home is not a haven for Islām, then the door is open for Shaytān to walk right through. Although Islām encourages women to take pride in their homes, this isn't our only duty as home makers.

When I die, my possessions will be useless to me. All my efforts will probably culminate in the back of a skip, as loved ones clear out any traces of my existence on earth. What will I have to show for my life then? Dust-free carpets? Gleaming windows? As far as I know, an immaculate sofa has not yet helped anyone in their grave!

"We have one life; it soon will be past, what we do for God is all that will last."

Shaytān has no grievance with me adorning my home, especially as it is distracting me from doing anything that will benefit me in the Hereafter. He would much rather desire that I polish my silverware than open my Qur'ān. Remember ***'Shaytān is not afraid of a dust covered Qur'ān'.***

Therefore, we should spend our time, energy and money cultivating an environment of Deen and Ibādah, not fashioning a show

house of no real use to us or our family. Use time wisely, and prioritise Deen over worldly tasks to attain benefit both in this world and the Hereafter. This is vital because *'when we die, we leave behind us all we have and take with us all we are'.*

Technology

As Muslims we should endeavour to follow the principle to *'keep out of your child's life anything that will keep God out of his heart.'*

Our children are one of our greatest investments in the Hereafter, as well as our joy and love. We make tireless efforts to ensure they are safe and with good friends, yet think nothing of placing them unsupervised in front of the television and internet. Often, we do not monitor or censor their interaction, so don't know what they are being exposed to or engaging with.

Many experts have highlighted the detrimental aspects of these futile pastimes yet they still dominate our daily lives. As a teacher, I always advise parents not to allow this technology to enter bedrooms, where children can have limitless, unsupervised exchange.

By not moderating their use, the harmful effects clearly outweigh the few benefits of T.V and Internet. Despite their dangers, they are still honoured guests in our homes and lead us directly into the claws of Shaytān.

Final Thought

I have highlighted three ways in which Shaytān can enter our homes. Clearly there are many others. When Shaytān gains residence into your home, then Islām is no longer a welcome guest. Homeowners take heed; 'if God is kept on the outside then there must be something wrong on the inside.'

Shaytān is your enemy and the most dangerous enemy is the one who keeps you close to him. Shaytān did not look unpleasant in my dream, but hid in the things I loved like my home, friends and children. Enjoy these bounties of Allāh ﷻ, but keep worldly pleasures in moderation and perspective. Utilise them wisely and take care that they do not invite Shaytān.

His treachery is unrivalled, but he is powerless if you choose not to succumb to him. Remember *'Shaytān can only have as much power as you give him'.* Therefore, strengthen your barriers against Shaytān and never assume you are not in his sight.

I leave you with this final thought. Your Deen is your greatest ally and *'happy is the one who walks so close to God that he leaves no room for Shaytān.'*

May Allāh ﷻ give us all the power to resist the temptation and treachery of Shaytān, Āmeen!

82 Year Old Becomes a Hāfiz

An Interview with Umme Sālih. A Grandmother who completed memorising the Holy Qur'ān at the age of 82 years!

house of no real use to us or our family. Use time wisely, and prioritise Deen over worldly tasks to attain benefit both in this world and the Hereafter. This is vital because *'when we die, we leave behind us all we have and take with us all we are'.*

Technology

As Muslims we should endeavour to follow the principle to *'keep out of your child's life anything that will keep God out of his heart.'*

Our children are one of our greatest investments in the Hereafter, as well as our joy and love. We make tireless efforts to ensure they are safe and with good friends, yet think nothing of placing them unsupervised in front of the television and internet. Often, we do not monitor or censor their interaction, so don't know what they are being exposed to or engaging with.

Many experts have highlighted the detrimental aspects of these futile pastimes yet they still dominate our daily lives. As a teacher, I always advise parents not to allow this technology to enter bedrooms, where children can have limitless, unsupervised exchange.

By not moderating their use, the harmful effects clearly outweigh the few benefits of T.V and Internet. Despite their dangers, they are still honoured guests in our homes and lead us directly into the claws of Shaytān.

Final Thought

I have highlighted three ways in which Shaytān can enter our homes. Clearly there are many others. When Shaytān gains residence into your home, then Islām is no longer a welcome guest. Homeowners take heed; 'if God is kept on the outside then there must be something wrong on the inside.'

Shaytān is your enemy and the most dangerous enemy is the one who keeps you close to him. Shaytān did not look unpleasant in my dream, but hid in the things I loved like my home, friends and children. Enjoy these bounties of Allāh ﷻ, but keep worldly pleasures in moderation and perspective. Utilise them wisely and take care that they do not invite Shaytān.

His treachery is unrivalled, but he is powerless if you choose not to succumb to him. Remember *'Shaytān can only have as much power as you give him'.* Therefore, strengthen your barriers against Shaytān and never assume you are not in his sight.

I leave you with this final thought. Your Deen is your greatest ally and *'happy is the one who walks so close to God that he leaves no room for Shaytān.'*

May Allāh ﷻ give us all the power to resist the temptation and treachery of Shaytān, Āmeen!

82 Year Old Becomes a Hāfiz

An Interview with Umme Sālih. A Grandmother who completed memorising the Holy Qur'ān at the age of 82 years!

All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ, the One Who said, **"And in truth We have made the Qur'ān easy to remember; but is there any that remembers?" (54:32)**

Many people all over the world memorise the Holy Qur'ān, and it is not strange to see the youth memorising the Holy Qur'ān at an early age. Alhamdulillāh, the One Who made the Holy Qur'ān easy for remembrance, had made it easy for Umme Sālih at age 82. In an interview with Umme Sālih, she was asked the following questions:

Q1: What was the reason that drove you to memorise the Holy Qur'ān after so many years?

She said, "I always hoped to memorise the Holy Qur'ān from the time I was young. My father always used to invoke Allāh ﷻ for me to become one of the memorisers of the Holy Qur'ān, like himself and like the elder brothers of my family who memorised it. So I memorised in the beginning about three parts and then after I completed the age of thirteen, I got married and became busy with the household and the children. After I had seven children, my husband died. They (the children) were all young so I took the time to raise them and educate them, and then after they grew up and got married, I had more time for myself. Therefore, the first thing I directed myself to focus upon was the Holy Qur'ān"

Q2: Tell us about your journey with the Holy Qur'ān.

She said, "My younger daughter was going to high school and she

was the closest of my children to me and the most beloved, because she stayed with me after her older sisters got married and got busy with their lives, and because she was a quiet girl, upright, loving and good. In addition, she was interested in learning the Holy Qur'ān, and her teachers encouraged her.

Furthermore, she was very enthusiastic and always told me of many women who were driven by this great motivation to memorise the Holy Qur'ān, and this is where I started."

Q3: Tell me about your way of memorisation.

She said, "We assigned 10 verses (meaning her and her daughter who was going to high school). So each day after Asr, we used to sit together. She would read and I would repeat after her three times. Then she would explain the meaning to me, and after a while, she would repeat that three times. The next morning, she would repeat them to me before she went to school.

She also recorded the recitations of Shaykh Al-Husary, repeating each verse three times and thus I continued to listen most of the time. The next day we would go to the next ten verses if my memorisation was good. Otherwise, we would postpone taking additional verses until the day after. Moreover, we assigned the day of Friday to review the memorisations of the entire week. And this was the journey from the beginning."

Then she said, "Over four and a half years, I memorised twelve Juz

according to the way I described to you. Then this young daughter got married. When her husband knew of our task concerning the memorisation, he rented a house close to me, close to my house, so that he could allow the continuation of the memorisation. In addition, he (may Allāh ﷻ reward him) used to encourage us and sometimes sit with us listening, explaining and teaching."

"Then after three years of her marriage, my daughter got busy with the children and the household and our schedule was interrupted, but that did not make her give up. To the contrary, she sensed that my eagerness for the memorisation was still established so she looked for a special good teacher to continue the journey under her supervision. So, I completed the memorisation by the success of Allāh ﷻ and my daughter is still working to finish her memorisation of the glorious Holy Qur'ān. She has a little left, Inshā-Allāh."

Q4: This motivation of yours, did it have an effect on other women around you?

She said, "It really had a powerful effect on others. My daughters and stepdaughters were all encouraged and worked on learning and teaching the Holy Qur'ān to their children and learning it themselves."

Q5: After finishing the Holy Qur'ān, don't you think about working on memorising Hadeeth?

She said, "Now I have memorised ninety Hadeeth and Inshā-Allāh

I will continue the journey. I depend, in my memorisation upon the tapes and upon the Holy Qur'ān radio station. At the end of each week, my daughter comes and checks my memorisation of three Hadeeth, and now, I try to memorise more."

Q6: Over this period of memorisation of the Holy Qur'ān, did your life change? Was it affected in one way or another?

She said, "Yes, I went through a major change and I tried always, all praise is due to Allāh ﷻ, to obey Allāh ﷻ before I started the memorisation. However, after I started the task of memorisation, I began to feel a self-comfort, a great self-comfort and all worries began to move away from me. I even reached the stage of freeing myself from all these excessive worries concerning fearing for the children and their affairs, and my morale was boosted.

I had a noble objective to work for and this is a great Ni'mah (favour) from Allāh ﷻ upon me. Since we know that some women, when they get old and they do not have a husband, and their children get married, may be destroyed by the empty time, thoughts, worries and so forth. But Alhamdulillāh, I didn't go through this and I made myself busy with a great task and a great objective.

Q7: Didn't you think at one point, to join one of the circles focusing on teaching the Holy Qur'ān?

The answer was, "Yes, some of the women suggested this to me, but I am a woman, who got used to staying at home, and I don't

like to go out every day and Alhamdulillāh, my daughter suffices me from all difficulty and I was so happy learning from her. My daughter had set an example in goodness and righteousness which we rarely find today.

She started this task and journey with me while she was an adolescent and this is a critical age many people complain of. She used to push herself so that she could have spare time to teach me, and she used to teach me with kindness and wisdom. Her husband was a good help to her and he exerted a lot of effort. I ask Allāh ﷻ to give them success and to bring their children up on righteousness."

Q8: What do you say to a woman of your age who wishes to learn and memorise the Holy Qur'ān, yet she is worried about it and feeling unable to?

She said, "I say to her that there shall be no despair with the firm, sincere and truthful determination and dependence on Allāh ﷻ at each time. And remember that at this age you should have the time for yourself. However, do not use your time to only go out or sleep and so forth. Rather, busy yourself with righteous work."

Q9: Now what would you say to a woman who is still young? What would you advise?

She (may Allāh ﷻ preserve her), said, "Preserve Allāh ﷻ and He will preserve you. Make use of the favour of Allāh ﷻ bestowed upon you from health and ways and means of comfort. Use that to

memorise the Book of Allāh ﷻ. This is the light which enlivens your heart, your life and your grave after you die.

And if you have a mother then exert the effort to teach her, and there is no better favour upon a mother than one of her righteous children aiding her to be close to Allāh ﷻ."

When You Look At Me

When you look at me,
What do you see?

Someone restricted within her beliefs?
Cannot think or gain freedom like
everyone else?

When you look at me,
What do you see?

Someone illiterate, backward and boring?
Well, I beg to differ,
This is not me,
The true me holds my belief with dignity,
The true me respects myself,
Enough not to expose it to the pleasures
of the world.
You see,
I know my worth is much more than the

worldly temptations,
The true me doesn't have to boast about the knowledge I hold in order to use it.

To the world I may be boring and backwards,
But to me I am fulfilling my Islamic duties.

The Fortunate Woman

It was a busy morning, approximately 8:30 am, when an elderly gentleman, in his 80s, showed up to have stitches removed from his thumb. He stated that he was in a hurry, as he had an appointment at 9:00 am.

I took his vital signs and had him take a seat, knowing it would be over an hour before someone would be able to see him. I saw him looking at his watch and decided, since I was not busy with another patient, I would evaluate his wound.

On examination it was well healed, so I talked to one of the doctors, and got the needed supplies to remove his stitches and redress his wound.

While taking care of his wound, we began to engage in conversation. I asked him if he had a doctor's appointment this morning, as he was in such a hurry. The gentleman told me no, that he needed to go to the nursing home to eat breakfast with his wife.

then inquired as to her health. He told me that she had been there for a while, and that she was a victim of Alzheimers Disease.

As we talked, and I finished dressing his wound, I asked if she would be worried if he was a bit late. He replied that she no longer knew who he was, that she had not recognised him in the last five years now.
I was surprised and asked him, "And you are still going every morning, even though she doesn't know who you are?" He smiled as he patted my hand and said, "She doesn't know me, but I still know who she is."

I had to hold back tears as he left, I had goose bumps on my arms and thought, "That is the kind of love I want in my life." She was one fortunate woman.

Poison your Mother-in-Law

A long time ago, a girl named Zainab got married and went to live with her husband and mother-in-law. In a very short time, Zainab found that she couldn't get along with her mother-in-law at all.

Their personalities were very different, and Zainab was angered by many of her mother-in-law's habits. In addition, she criticised Zainab constantly.

Days passed days and weeks passed weeks. Zainab and her mother-in-law never stopped arguing and fighting. But what made

the situation even worse was that, according to ancient tradition, Zainab had to bow to her mother-in-law and obey her every wish.

All the anger and unhappiness in the house was causing the poor husband great distress.

Finally, Zainab could not stand her mother-in-law's bad temper and dictatorship any longer, and she decided to do something about it.

Zainab went to see her father's good friend, Abdullāh, who sold herbs. She told him the situation and asked if he would give her some poison so that she could solve the problem once and for all. Abdullāh thought for a while, and finally said, "Zainab, I will help you to solve your problem, but you must listen to me and obey what I tell you to do." Zainab said, "Yes, uncle Abdullāh, I will do whatever you tell me to do."

Abdullāh went into the back room and returned in a few minutes with a package of herbs. He told Zainab, "You can't use a quick-acting poison to get rid of your mother-in-law, because that would cause people to become suspicious. Therefore, I have given you a number of herbs that will slowly build up poison in her body.

Every other day prepare some delicious meal and put a little of these herbs in her serving. Now, in order to make sure that nobody suspects you when she dies, you must be very careful to act very friendly towards her. Don't argue with her, obey her every wish,

and treat her like a queen."

Zainab was so happy. She thanked Abdullāh and hurried home to start her plot of murdering her mother-in-law.

Weeks went by, and months went by, and every other day, Zainab served the specially treated food to her mother-in-law. She remembered what Abdullāh had said about avoiding suspicion, so she controlled her temper, obeyed her mother-in-law, and treated her like her own mother. After six months had passed, the whole household had changed.

Zainab had practised controlling her temper so much that she found that she almost never got mad or upset. She hadn't had an argument in six months with her mother-in-law, who now seemed much kinder and easier to get along with.

The mother-in-law's attitude toward Zainab changed, and she began to love Zainab like her own daughter. She kept telling friends and relatives that Zainab was the best daughter-in-law one could ever find. Zainab and her mother-in-law were now treating each other like a real mother and daughter. Zainab's husband was very happy to see what was happening.

One day, Zainab came to see Abdullāh and asked for his help again. She said, "Dear uncle Abdullāh, please help me to keep the poison from killing my mother-in-law! She's changed into such a nice woman, and I love her like my own mother. I do not want her

to die because of the poison I gave her."

Abdullāh smiled, nodding his head, "Zainab, there's nothing to worry about. I never gave you any poison. The herbs I gave you were vitamins to improve her health. The only poison was in your mind and attitude towards her, but that has been all washed away by the love which you gave to her."

Disease of the Tongue

There is not one person amongst us that could say, in all honesty that we have not lied on a number of occasions.

There are various reasons that could result in people telling lies, although each reason may differ from the other, ultimately they all stem from one root cause which is being unable to face the consequences of telling the truth.

According to the psychologist Robert Feldman, people will lie to appear more agreeable and to impress others in a social situation. In effect, they want to elevate their self esteem. Other reasons may include to avoid punishment and anger or perhaps a fear of reduction in social status.

We will lie about the type of car we drive, where we reside, the amount of money we make and etc. My fellow Muslims, why would we intend to lie about temporary happiness, are we not aware that we are playing the role of travellers?

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said "Do not ever lie, because lying leads to very abhorrent sins and those in turn lead to hellfire. One keeps on lying and seeks to do that until one is recorded as a liar in the books of Allāh ﷻ." [Ibn Mājah]

Sadly, lying is a disgraceful vice, rampant in our societies. Public figures lie, governments lie, countries are invaded and wars are declared based on lies.

Unfortunately in our society we have perfected the "art" of lying, gone are the days when a lie destroyed the liar's dignity and deprived him of our trust.

Sorrowfully, the act of lying is widespread in the Muslim society too. Islām views lying as a serious vice. Allāh ﷻ states in the Holy Qur'ān, **"Truly Allāh guides not one who transgresses and lies." [40:28]**

Today, lies often roll off the human tongue just as fast as the moths are attracted to an open flame. We often make false excuses such as "I was too busy" or "I forgot" or say words that can be taken as promises by others like "I'll call you back tomorrow" with no such intention.

We should be cautious not to lie about trivial matters. It is frequently seen today that the children are instructed to make excuses such as "my mum is in the toilet", or "my dad is not in" unaware

of the negative effect it will have on the child. The parents are in actual fact permitting their children to believe that lying is permissible.

Dear Muslims! Take heed from warnings given to us by our beloved Creator and His Prophet ﷺ and witness yourself the enhancement in the quality of your life.

Are the Signs of the Hour here?

The Holy Prophet ﷺ stated amongst the signs of the Hour: **"Women who are dressed but naked, seductively swaying and dancing about, their heads look like the humps of camels. They will not enter Paradise or even smell its fragrance, although its fragrance reaches to such great distances."** (Bukhāri, Muslim)

"Women will be naked even though they are dressed, these women will be astray and will lead others astray." (Muslim)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ refers to these women who, though they are wearing clothes, it is as if they are undressed. Women who are dressed but yet, they expose their bodily figures because of tight clothes, wear clothes that do not cover those parts of their body which are considered part of their nakedness, or wear clothes that are thin and revealing and so, exposing their bodily parts. They sway as they walk swinging their bodily parts trying to catch the attention of men to seduce them. Their heads look like the humps of camels refers to the fact that as a show of seduction these

women expose their hair to strange men raising it so as to catch attention or exposing it in such a way that it presents as an obvious feature of attraction and invites men to gaze at them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has stated that those women who behave in such a manner are astray, and with or without intention are leading other innocent women and men astray.

Modest dress i.e. Hijāb is ordained by Allāh ﷻ because it protects women from the evil gazes of men, and men from the sexual seduction of women.

Allāh ﷻ clearly explains in the Holy Qur'ān that the Hijāb for Muslim women is compulsory. Every Muslim woman who has reached mature age must wear the Hijāb.

"Tell the believing women that they must lower their gazes (from forbidden things) and guard their private parts (from illegal sexual acts) and not expose their adornments (hair, body, arms, legs etc.) except only that which is apparent (i.e. hands), and to wrap their bosom with their shawls and not to expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their son's, their husband's sons, their brothers or their brothers sons, or their sisters sons or their (Muslim) women, or the (female) slaves whom their right hands possess, or old male servants who have no sexual urge, or children who are not conscious of sexual urge. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And beg Allāh to forgive you all O' believers, that you achieve success." (24:30)

There are a number of reasons why Muslim women do not wear the Hijāb. Reality is that they are mere excuses that expose the individuals weakness rather than justify their action. If you are one of these women, then you must ask yourself why you don't wear the Hijāb!

1. I will look unattractive...

Question is, unattractive for who? If you are unmarried then you are attracting the wrong people. If it is for men then the attraction is a sexual one, not one which admires you for your qualities but one that seeks to sexually exploit you. Reality is that most women who seek to look attractive to men, usually lack self confidence and self-esteem and become infatuated about the way they look spending excessive time and money. They seek to gain confidence through these means but this confidence is temporary and deceptive, not one that truly admires yourself for what you are, but what you can sexually offer. If it is to impress peers/female rivals or other women then this is definitely a sign of lack of self-confidence and suggests that your perception is distorted to such an extent that you have prioritised the way you look above your other qualities. Reality, is the focus on your true qualities rather than the way you look which is a greater boost of self confidence, one which is real and respectful. If you are married then this is worse as you should be spending time and effort attracting your husband not strange men. These women are sinning and making others sin,

who gaze at them. If this isn't your reason, then what is? You need to question yourself!

2. My friends or family will laugh at me...

You need to question what is it that they will laugh at? Is it the way you look? Is it because they haven't got the strength to do the same and feel threatened? Is it because they are not used to you wearing a Hijāb? Or is it just jealousy! Remember that you are performing this act of worship to gain Allāh ﷻ pleasure.

What other people think is not as important as what Allāh ﷻ thinks. In an ideal world it is encouraging to have support of friends and family in these matters but reality is you're in the right and they are in the wrong and are the ignorant ones. With time it will pass and you will see the fruits of your acts as Allāh ﷻ always assists those who are mocked for good deeds and they are always the successful ones. Besides, to mock and discourage others from such acts is extremely sinful and gains the wrath of Allāh ﷻ.
These people should question their Imān as it is Kufr to mock at something which Allāh ﷻ has made compulsory in the Holy Qur'ān. You are showing these people an example and if any begin to follow in your footsteps then this will be very rewarding for you in this world and the Hereafter, Inshā-Allāh!

3. I am either too young to wear it or not religious enough

Allāh's ﷻ decree is the ultimate decree and a woman who has

reached puberty (i.e. her first menstrual period) is ordered by Allāh ﷻ to wear the Hijāb. To consider oneself too young to wear the Hijāb or harbouring the feeling I need to reach such a pious level before I commit myself to such an act is deception from Shaytān. It is the environment that we spend most of our time in that feeds us this perception. If you are spending your time in the company of women who do not dress modestly with that which Allāh ﷻ has ordained then these are some of the excuses you will use to justify your actions, yet, this excuse is unacceptable in Islām and shows ignorance in Islamic knowledge rather than intelligence and sincerity. Every step a Muslim makes towards Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ will make the next step easier. If you have stalled because you feel that you are not religious enough, then you are fooling yourself, as the Hijāb is a great step to openly declaring that you are continually progressing and that you haven't fallen prey to Shaytān's whispers of deception. Don't worry about what others think of you and that they may begin to point out faults in you, as it is what is in your heart that Allāh ﷻ credits.

If there is sincerity in your action then that level of piety will soon come. If you reach such heights at a young age then you will be of those who will be shaded under the shade of Allāh ﷻ on the Day of Judgement when there will be no shade but His shade. Don't fool yourself in thinking that 'I will wear it after Hajj or when I begin to read Salāh five times a day or when I have accomplished so and so'. Reality is these will be accomplished easier when the Hijāb is worn. May Allāh ﷻ guide us to the straight path and save us from the evil deception of Shaytān! Āmeen!

4. People will think I am a fundamentalist

The answer to this question is, yes! I do consider Islām a fundamental of my life, something I am proud of and I wish to advertise in my appearance. If the media has portrayed a person who holds these qualities at heart and has stereotyped such a person as an extremist, then that is something we will have to persevere with, as we don't look to the media to prescribe to us our Islām. By definition, an extremist would be that person who falls on the extremes of the Shari'ah. So, somebody who is so liberal in their views that he or she feels that the Hijāb is not prescribed in Islām in the manner that you dress, then he/she is the extremist as he/ she entertains those views which are not of the norm of Islām but rather an extreme and unacceptable view. Media has a habit of stereotyping people and this stereotype will always be a changing thing, depending on the behaviour of those who are stereotyped and the ignorance of those who are easily brainwashed. If the stereotype is a negative one, then those victimised will need to prove this wrong by showing a positive Islamic character. If the belief internally is strong then the outward confidence will be apparent. This outward confidence is what attracts people to a person and if one perseveres with this, the fruits of this sacrifice will become clear soon.

5. People will think I have been forced to wear it or oppressed...

If someone is forced to wear the Hijāb then that person will seek every opportunity to take it off. If someone shows that they are comfortable by wearing it at those appropriate times that have

been prescribed by Allāh ﷻ then this will show that this person has the knowledge of when it should be worn and is thus wearing it out of choice. Those who have been forced are usually deprived of this knowledge and seek any opportunity to take it off or just do it as an ethnic or cultural thing. It will be apparent that someone who promotes the Hijāb and encourages others to do the same has not been coerced into such an act, but is rather seeking the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. Reality is no man can truly force a woman to wear a Hijāb the way it should be worn, unless she wishes to do so. In my opinion those women who don't wear the Hijāb are the ones who have been forced not to do so because of peer pressure and are the passive ones who have fallen prey to the fashions of the so called 'western liberalism'. In today's society it is usually the dominant and confident women who usually decide to wear the Hijāb not the weak and passive ones.

6. I will lose friends. I will not be approachable or get funny looks...

One of the wisdoms of outwardly expressing ones Islām is that it attracts the religiously conscious people and repels those who don't give Islām priority in their lives. Immediately, one will notice that their company of friends and colleagues will begin to change for the better. Yes! It is possible that you may lose friends slowly but it is also very true that you will gain better friends. Friends, who share the same objectives as you and appreciate and respect you for your beliefs and character and not just for your looks. Friends and companions are an essential part of who we become

and wearing the Hijāb will nurture the right company which will benefit us, even if this may not be as apparent in the first instance. Those who feel comfortable with the way you look will be attracted to you and with time you will begin to realise that people will respect you more for your determination and appreciate you more for what you have become. Remember! Those who give you funny looks, do so either because they feel uncomfortable about themselves wearing the Hijāb or they feel very threatened by you. So the last laugh is on them!

7. It is not an important part of being a Muslim, modesty is in the heart not in appearance...

If true modesty exits internally, it will inevitably display itself externally. If someone is not modestly dressed then it seems obvious this is not a quality that exits in such a person. Therefore those who believe that modesty just exists in the heart and doesn't need to be demonstrated externally in appearance are deceiving themselves. The external appearance is what attracts or repels. For this very reason even if the heart is modest and the outward appearance is not, the external appearance will attract the wrong attention regardless. The Hijāb protects the modesty of women and simultaneously prevents those men who are vulnerable, from committing sin. If a woman is modestly dressed she is less likely to be harassed by immodest men. Yes! It is true that modesty can be displayed in ones character and personality, but it is also true that if one is displayed immodestly, then what is visible is what people will judge at first sight and personality becomes a secondary feature.

Allāh ﷻ is the All-Knower and All-Wise, and it is He who we turn to for direction and it is Allāh's ﷻ definition of modesty that we abide by and not our own logic which is defined by the changing fashions and norms of the time. In Islām modesty in appearance for a woman means to dress so as not to attract other men. Allāh ﷻ has clearly described this in Sūrah An-Noor of the Holy Qur'ān, **"Tell the believing women that they must lower their gazes (from forbidden things) and guard their private parts (from illegal sexual acts) and not expose their adornments (hair, body, arms, legs etc.) except only that which is apparent (i.e. hands), and to wrap their bosom with their shawls and not to expose their adornment."**

8. I feel suffocated in one

Women have been veiling themselves for centuries, this is not a new phenomena. This was a practice even before the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and was considered a practice of the noble women. Slave girls and immoral women would be dressed immodestly and were easily differentiated. Today the roles seem to have reversed.

The Hijāb is not something that is to be worn all the time, but it is worn in front of those men who are non-Mahram. A woman should try to appear attractive to her husband and the husband to his wife and their energies should be dispensed in such acts rather than pleasing the appetites of strangers. A woman will spend hours beautifying herself when she leaves the house and as such displaying herself to other men but when it comes to her husband.

little effort is made if at all. The Hijāb only suffocates those women who don't understand what it is, and don't appreciate its wisdom and its rewards. If it is physically suffocating then there are many alternate materials and styles of Hijāb which will be more appropriate for you.

9. My family/husband etc. will not let me

From the Islamic perspective our Maker's directives and commands are of greater importance than those who He created. If Allāh ﷻ made it an obligation that women should wear the Hijāb in front of non-Mahram men, then no one can overrule that command or justify non-compliance. If the family or husband is not permitting you to wear the Hijāb then they are at fault and you should not obey them on this issue. Rather than confront them directly, it would be better to discuss this issue in a sensible way with Islamic Ādāb (conduct). Sometimes it helps to present or leave them a leaflet so as not to seem threatening. The Prophets and their followers have also had to face major challenges and opposition. They remained steadfast and were thus the successful ones at the end. Initially it will be a challenge and requires strength and strong Imān and it may seem like the whole world is against you. With time you will see that you have made the right decision and you will reap the benefits in this life and the hereafter.

In Majālisul Abrār it is said: As long as a woman remains concealed from men her Deen remains the safest because it has been narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to his daughter, Sayyidah Fātimah ؓ, "What is best for a woman?" She replied, "That a

woman should not look at any man nor should a man look at a woman." The Holy Prophet ﷺ praised her answer.

Nagging

Among the disliked actions of wives is their habit of nagging. Nagging in fact is an expression of ingratitude. The habit of nagging is indeed evil and destructive to the happiness of the home. It diverts the husband's heart and attention from his wife. It hardens his feelings and he then becomes insensitive towards her. Little do wives realise the devastating consequences of their nagging. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has exhorted and ordered the Muslim wife to adopt an appearance which will lighten the face of even a gloomy husband with pleasure and happiness. But, nagging produces the opposite effect.

"The best of womankind is she who makes her husband happy when he glances at her."

Her glance at him should be sufficient to make him radiant with happiness. Only a woman conscious of Allāh ﷻ, of the Ākhirah, and who strives to conduct her life along the lines of the Sunnah, will succeed to achieve this act of Ibādah; maintaining the happiness and the pleasure of her husband, an act which secures for her more Thawāb than that which men obtain in Jihād in the Path of Allāh ﷻ. Her first and best Path of Allāh ﷻ, the supreme Jihād is her striving to please her husband and to guard the home and children with the love, care and ability which are exclusive to women

of the Sunnah.

The following narration illustrates the value and merit of a woman's activities within the confines of her home. Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Abbās ﷺ narrates,

"A woman came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said, "O' Rasūlullāh ﷺ! I have been delegated by the women to come to you. Allāh ﷻ has made this Jihād obligatory on males, if they succeed, they are rewarded; if they are slain, they remain alive in their graves and are given sustenance by their Lord. But we women remain in their service. What is there for us?" Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "Convey to any woman whom you meet that obedience to the husband and acknowledging his rights are equal to Jihād. However, few among you do so."

Thus, the Muslim wife should realise that her home duties, caring for her children and her loving attitudes and responses to her husband, although regarded as simple acts, are in fact deeds of the highest virtue equal to, if not superior to Jihād in the Path of Allāh ﷻ waged by men. Since the home affairs are acts of high merit, which invite the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ, it benefits her to exercise as much patience and restraint when she is confronted with things which are displeasing and frustrating to her.

Every Muslim is required to strive against his/her nafs (carnal desire). This process of striving is known as Mujāhadah (striving against the nafs). Woman's sphere of Mujāhadah is the home, her husband and children. She achieves Roohāni (spiritual) progress

with her Mujāhadah (striving against the nafs) in this field. She should ponder that the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ in regard to herself is coupled with the pleasure of her husband. Her constant contemplation of this reality will make easy for her to bear even the wrongs and injustices of her husband. While the husband has no licence to treat his wife unjustly, in the interest of her happiness and her home, she should try to cast a blind eye on her husbands faults. In contrast, she should try to offer more than the obligatory rights required from her by the marriage. In order to capture her husband's love, it will be necessary for her to offer sacrifices in various spheres.

Advice to a Daughter

These are some advices that an Arab poetess gave to her daughter who was getting married. It is hoped that if a woman in any age brings into practice the teachings taught in these advices, Inshā Allāh her home will be like a garden of Jannah.

The First Advice

My beloved daughter! *Lead a life of contentment. Be content even with simple food. The dry bread and water, which is eaten with contentment, is better than rich meal, which is eaten after your persistent complaints, forcing him to grudgingly provide it for you.*

The Second Advice

My beloved daughter! Always listen attentively to what your husband says. Give importance to what he says and do as he says. In this manner, you will soon win a place in his heart, because it is not really a person who is beloved, but what the person does that is most loved.

The Third Advice

Beloved daughter! Tend your beauty carefully so that whenever he will look at you, he will be pleased with his choice. Within the limits of decency, use as much fragrance as possible, and remember that no part of your body or dress should repulse him.

The Fourth Advice

Beloved daughter! To be always attractive to him, put Surma or kajal to your eyes, for beautiful eyes make a person's whole being beautiful in the eyes of the beholder. Bath and do ablution regularly, as this is the best perfume and the best way to cleanli-

with her Mujāhadah (striving against the nafs) in this field. She should ponder that the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ in regard to herself is coupled with the pleasure of her husband. Her constant contemplation of this reality will make easy for her to bear even the wrongs and injustices of her husband. While the husband has no licence to treat his wife unjustly, in the interest of her happiness and her home, she should try to cast a blind eye on her husbands faults. In contrast, she should try to offer more than the obligatory rights required from her by the marriage. In order to capture her husband's love, it will be necessary for her to offer sacrifices in various spheres.

Advice to a Daughter

These are some advices that an Arab poetess gave to her daughter who was getting married. It is hoped that if a woman in any age brings into practice the teachings taught in these advices, Inshā Allāh her home will be like a garden of Jannah.

The First Advice

My beloved daughter! *Lead a life of contentment. Be content even with simple food. The dry bread and water, which is eaten with contentment, is better than rich meal, which is eaten after your persistent complaints, forcing him to grudgingly provide it for you.*

The Second Advice

My beloved daughter! Always listen attentively to what your husband says. Give importance to what he says and do as he says. In this manner, you will soon win a place in his heart, because it is not really a person who is beloved, but what the person does that is most loved.

The Third Advice

Beloved daughter! Tend your beauty carefully so that whenever he will look at you, he will be pleased with his choice. Within the limits of decency, use as much fragrance as possible, and remember that no part of your body or dress should repulse him.

The Fourth Advice

Beloved daughter! To be always attractive to him, put Surma or kajal to your eyes, for beautiful eyes make a person's whole being beautiful in the eyes of the beholder. Bath and do ablution regularly, as this is the best perfume and the best way to cleanli-

ness.

The Fifth Advice

Beloved daughter! Prepare his meals before it is time as hunger becomes a flame if not satisfied. During the hours of rest, keep it quiet and peaceful as disturbed sleep makes a man miserable and angry.

The Sixth Advice

Beloved daughter! Protect his home and his treasure: let no one enter the house without his permission and do not waste his treasure by indulging in exhibition, for treasure can only be tended through good management and the family only through good sense.

The Seventh Advice

Beloved daughter! Never disobey him and always keep his secrets, for disobeying such an honourable man would put fuel to fire and revealing his secrets would destroy his trust in you. And you, yourself will not be safe from his (retaliatory) double standards. Someone has rightly said,

"To be trusted is better than to be loved."

The Eighth Advice

My beloved daughter! If he is grieved over something, then do not mention to him anything that has pleased you. Share his grief. When he is happy, do not disclose your hidden grief and do not complain to your husband about any of his behaviour. Be happy with him. Otherwise you will be regarded as one who confuses him.

The Ninth Advice

My beloved daughter! If you wish to be respectable in his eyes, then honour and respect him and act according to his wish. Then at every stage of your life you will find him to be your best companion.

The Tenth Advice

My beloved daughter! Hold fast to this advice from me. Sweet flowers will not blossom in your life, as long as you do not suppress your wish for his pleasure. My dear daughter, my darling! I bid

farewell with these words and give you in Allāh's ﷻ care. May He make all steps in your life good and preserve you from all evil. *(Āmeen)*

Save Yourself

I have a story to tell. So, sit back with ease and take heed of what I am about to say. I was once young, full of the vigour of youth, blessed with good looks and a personality to match. Everybody was a new adventure for me. I took no heed from my parents' advice. I was neglectful of my duties to my Lord. The world was my oyster. I had no worries. Life was for living! I was carefree. Males desired me, females envied me; life was wonderful.
That was a few years ago. Little did I know that my life would change. Today my life is a very different story. Everyday is a torment for me; life feels like a burden and though I am trying to be dutiful towards my Lord, I feel I am not getting very far. "Why", I kept asking myself, "Why is my life like this?" The answer was staring me in the face.

I'd been neglectful towards my Lord. I'd been too intoxicated with lust and desire, committed to sins that my Lord had warned against. I was so involved in them that I thought I was doing no wrong. In hindsight I was living in sin from the moment I woke up to the moment I went to sleep.

I am a mother now and when I see the youngsters leaving school today, freely mixing with each other and holding hands, I look at

them and think, "You all think it's so right, but you don't know how wrong it is." That is why I thought of writing this letter. If just one of you takes my advice, then my letter is not in vain.

T.V, music, magazines all contribute to our desires and actions. I think that it takes a strong and true Believer, someone who truly fears Allāh ﷻ, to walk away from sins especially zina (adultery). Let your first touch, your first kiss be with the person you'll spend eternity with, your husband or wife. Don't give into a 'moment of madness,' a relationship that may not last a week.

Allāh ﷻ has given us the ability to do many things, but the one thing He has not given us is the chance to turn back time. Had He done so, I would do it in a second and correct so many wrongs. But I can't have that. My mistakes will be with me forever. You have a chance not to make these mistakes. Don't make them, watch Him bless your life in both worlds. Pray for me and the entire Ummah.

Learn a Lesson from Sayyidah Fātimah ؓ

When Sayyidah Fātimah ؓ married Sayyidunā Ali ؓ, the couple decided that he would work outdoors while she tended to all domestic affairs. She therefore fulfilled her tasks and served her husband with great enthusiasm and devotion. However, unlike today's times, the time in which they lived was a period of difficulty. Just to have bread, a woman of those times had to grind the wheat

into flour by herself, gather wood to light the oven, kindle the fire and then bake the bread. Despite the hardship involved in this single task, she dutifully continued with all her responsibilities without a word of complaint.

When the Muslims conquered Khaybar and a great deal of proceeds including many slaves fell to their lot, someone suggested to Sayyidah Fātimah ﵂ that she request her father for a slave to assist her in her work. Consequently, she went to the room of Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﵂ and requested her to ask the Holy Prophet ﷺ for a slave on her behalf because her hands had become hard and rough as a result of grinding flour and her chest had developed blue lines because of the strain of carrying the water bag to and from the well. When Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﵂ related what Sayyidah Fātimah ﵂ had ld her, the Holy Prophet ﷺ sent for Sayyidah Fātimah ﵂ According to another narration, she approached the Holy Prophet ﷺ directly but returned without placing her request because there were many people with him at the time. According to this narration, the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to her house afterwards and asked her what she had come for. Because she found it hard to relate her sufferings to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Sayyidunā Ali ﵁ explained the situation to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. One can well imagine the grief that the Holy Prophet ﷺ felt when he heard about his beloved daughter's hardship.

Addressing Sayyidah Fātimah ﵂, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "I regard it inappropriate that the daughter of the Holy Prophet ﷺ should be given a slave until every person in Madeenah has one. However, I shall prescribe for you something that is better than a slave. When you lay down to sleep at night, say Subhān-Allāh 33

times, Alhamdulillāh 33 times and Allāhu Akbar 34 times. This is better than any slave." She was after all the daughters of the best of creation. Therefore, without saying a word, she felt contented with what her father told her. This prescription is therefore called Tasbeeh Fātimi. (Jāmi'ul Usool)

In this episode, the Holy Prophet ﷺ by the means of his daughter taught Muslims that irrespective of the rights that her husband owes to her from a technical perspective, a Muslim wife ought to care for her husband's home and regard this task as her own.

A Woman Dies on seeing the Holy Prophets ﷺ Grave

A woman came to Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﵂ and said,
"Take me to the grave of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, so that I may be blessed with its sight."

Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﵂ opened the room that contained the grave of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and let her go inside. The woman on seeing the grave started crying in love and memory of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In fact she wept so bitterly and continually that she collapsed and died there and then (May Allāh ﷻ bless her). The blessed woman remembered the happy days when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was alive, and then the pangs of separation proved fatal for her.
Can the records of history produce a parallel to such love and devotion?

Rules for a Happy Marriage

- Never be angry at the same time.
- Never yell at each other unless the house is on fire.
- If one of you has to win an argument, let it be the other one.
- If you have to criticise, do it lovingly.
- Never bring up mistakes of the past.
- Neglect the whole world rather than each other.
- Never go to sleep with an argument unsettled.
- At least once every day, try to say one kind or complimentary thing to your husband/wife.
- When you have done something wrong, be ready to admit it and ask for forgiveness. It takes two to make a quarrel,

Sayyidah Umme Habeebah's ﵂ Behaviour towards her Father

Sayyidah Umme Habibah ﵂ was previously married to Ubaidullāh Ibn Jahsh. She migrated with her husband to Ethiopia. Her husband left Islām and died there as a disbeliever. The Holy Prophet ﷺ sent his proposal to marry her through King Negus, while she was still passing her days in Ethiopia as a widow. She accepted the offer and came to Madeenah to live with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. During the period of the peace treaty between the Muslims and Polytheists of Makkah, her father Abū Sufyān ﵁ (before accepting Islām) once came to Madeenah for negotiations in connection with reinforcing the peace treaty. He went to see Sayyidah Umme Ha-

beebah ﵂. As he was about to sit on the bedding in her room, she removed it from under him. He was surprised with her behaviour and said,

"Was the bedding unfit for me or I unfit for the bedding?"

She replied, " The bedding is meant for my beloved Prophet ﷺ, while you are a polytheist and therefore unclean. How can I allow you to sit on his bedding?"

Abū Sufyān ﵁ was full of grief and remarked,

"Since you left us, you have developed bad manners."

In the face of the great reverence that she had for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, she could not tolerate an unclean polytheist (even though he was her own father) to sit on the Holy Prophet's ﷺ bedding.

Once she came to know from the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the virtues of the 2 Rak'ats of Chāsht (pre-noon prayer). Since that time, she kept on offering this Salāh regularly.
Her father, Abū Sufyān ﵁ later embraced Islām. On the third day of his death, she sent for some perfume and used it saying,

"I neither need the perfume nor like it. I have heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying, `A woman is not permitted to mourn the death of any person (except her husband) for more than 3 days.` (The mourning period in case of a husband's death is 4 months and 10 days). I am using the perfume simply to show that I am not

mourning the death of my father any longer."

When she was about to die, she sent for Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﷺ and said,
"We have been rivals in sharing the love of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is just possible that we might have offended each other. I forgive you. Please forgive me too."

Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﷺ said,
"I forgive you by all means. May Allāh ﷻ forgive you too"
She remarked,
"O, Ā'ishah, you have made me very happy. May Allāh ﷻ keep you happy."

Similarly, she sent for Sayyidah Umme Salamah ﷺ and secured her forgiveness.
The tension between two rival wives is natural and expected. Sayyidah Umme Habeebah ﷺ wanted to be forgiven by all before she appeared before Allāh ﷻ. Her reverence and love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ can be judged from her behaviour towards her father.

Hijāb

HAYĀ (shyness and modesty) is an integral part of Imān, hence the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:
"Hayā is a branch of Imān" (Bukhāri, Muslim)

Sayyidah Fātimah ﷺ excelled in the qualities of shyness and modesty. Her observance of the highest form of Hijāb (concealment from males) indicates the strict demands of Islām regarding the observance of Hijāb. Once Sayyidunā Ali ﷺ asked Sayyidah Fātimah ﷺ,

"What is best for women?" Sayyidah Fātimah ﷺ replied: "They should not gaze at men nor men at them."

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ heard this reply of Sayyidah Fātimah ﷺ, he approved of it and made Duā on behalf of Sayyidah Fātimah ﷺ.
In one Hadeeth it appears that upon hearing this reply of Sayyidah Fātimah ﷺ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Fātimah is a part of me."

This statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ indicates the correctness of the answer and that it was exactly the same view of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When females are buried, the Islamic requirement is for their bodies to be concealed by a sheet held over as the body is being lowered into the grave. This practice is observed despite the fact that the female body is covered in 'kafan' (shroud) consisting of five different sheets wrapped around the body. The entire body from above the head to below the feet are covered in five garments

and totally concealed from the gaze. However, despite this total covering, Sayyidah Fātimah ﷺ made 'wasiyyat' (will) at the time of her death that her body must be hidden totally from the gaze of strange males. This wish was carried out and the Sahābah © adopted 'Ijmā', (consensus of opinion) on this practice of Hijāb for the dead female body, to be instituted as a Shariah practice for all time. Hence, we find today, the Ummah strictly observing this practice of Hijāb for the dead female body, started by Sayyidah Fātimah ﷺ, the beloved daughter of our Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Mothers were once Daughters

Every home should have a daughter,
for there is nothing like a girl,
to keep the world around her,
in one continuous whirl.

From the moment she arrives on earth,
and on through womanhood,
daughter is a female,
who is seldom understood.

One minute she is laughing,
the next she starts to cry,
man just can't understand her,
and there's just no use to try.
She is soft and cuddly but she is also wise,
and smart but she's wondrous,

combination of a mind and brain and heart.

And even in her baby days,
she's just born cute,
and anything she really wants,
she manages to get.

For even at a tender age,
she uses all her skills,
and she can melt the hardest heart,
with the sunshine of her smile.

She starts out as a rosebud,
with her beauty unrevealed,
then through a happy childhood,
her petals are unsealed.

She's soon a sweet girl graduate,
and then a blushing bride,
and then a lovely woman,
as the rosebud opens wide.

And some day in the future,
if it be Allāh's ﷻ gracious Will,
she, too, will be a mother.

Whose heart is filled,
with the love when she beholds "the Angel"

Allāh ﷻ sent her from above,
and there would be no life at all
in the world without a darling daughter,
who in turn becomes a mother!!!

A Child's Love

I ran into a stranger as he passed by, "Oh, excuse me." was my reply. He said, "Please excuse me too, I wasn't watching you."
We were very polite, this stranger and I, we went on our way and said goodbye.
But at home, a different story is told, how we treat our loved ones, young and old.
Later that day, whilst cooking a meal, my son stood beside me very still.
When I turned, I nearly knocked him down, "Move out of the way" I said with a frown.
He walked away, his little heart broken, I didn't realise how harshly I'd spoken.
While I lay awake in bed, a small voice came to me and said,
"Whilst dealing with a stranger,
common courtesy you see,
but children that you love you seem too busy.
Go look on the kitchen floor, you'll find some flowers by the door.
Those are the flowers he brought for you, he picked them himself
pink, yellow and blue.
He stood very quietly not to spoil the surprise, you never saw the tears in his eyes."

By this time, I felt very small, and now my tears began to fall.
I quietly went to his bed, "Wake up little one" I said.
"Are these the flowers you picked for me?"
He smiled, "I found them by the tree. I picked them 'cause they're pretty like you, I knew you'd like 'em, especially the blue."
"Son, I'm sorry for the way I acted today, I shouldn't have yelled at you that way."
He said, "Oh, mum, that's okay I love you anyway."
I replied, "Son, I love you too and the flowers
especially the blue."

The Golden Box

Some time ago, a mother was angry at her little girl for wasting her gold wrapping paper. She was even more upset when she found that the girl had used it to decorate a box.
Nevertheless, the little girl brought the gift box to her mother and said, "Mummy, this is for you." The mother was embarrassed by her earlier reaction, but her anger flared again when she found the box to be empty.
She spoke harshly at the girl, "Don't you know that when you give someone a present there's supposed to be something inside!"
With tears in her eyes, the girl said, "Oh, mummy, it's not empty. I filled it with hugs until it was full." The mother was crushed. She threw her arms around the little girl and begged her forgiveness.
Even after that child had gone, her mother kept that golden box.
Every time, she felt discouraged or alone, she would open the box and take out an imaginary hug and remember the love of the child

that put it there.

A Fascinating Story of a Jewish Girl

It is mentioned in Lam'āte Soofiyyah that a pious man was once lecturing on the virtues of Bismillāhir Rahmānir Raheem:

A Jewish girl was also listening to his lecture. She was so moved by the lecture that she accepted Islām. Whenever she did anything, she always recited Bismillāh.

When her father, who was the king's minister, discovered that she had embraced Islām, he became very upset, he feared that the people would look down upon him. He began threatening her in the hope that she would forsake Islām. But, she would not. Finally, he decided that the only solution was to kill her.

Thus, he thought of a plan. He gave her a ring which was used for sealing letters and documents in the king's court. He said to her, "Keep it until I ask for it."
Saying Bismillāh, she took it and put it in her pocket. That night, her father tip-toed into her room, stole the ring and flung it into the river. That would give the king all the reason to hang her.

The following day, a fisherman came along to the minister and gave him a fish as a gift. The minister took it and gave it to his daughter to prepare it. As soon as she opened the stomach to clean the fish, she found the ring. She was shocked! For it looked exactly

like the ring her father had given her! She searched for her ring in her pocket but couldn't find it. She read, Bismillāh and put the ring back into her pocket. She prepared the fish and presented it to her father. He ate the fish and then asked her for the ring.

She said, Bismillāh and produced it from her pocket. The father was shocked for he had thrown it into the river. How could she take it out from her pocket! He told her what he had done and asked her where she had got it from. She told him that she found it in the fish's stomach. Witnessing the blessing of Bismillāh, he accepted Islām straight away.

Showing Ingratitude

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "O assembly of women! Give charity, for verily, I have seen you to be the majority of the inmates of the Fire."

Someone asked: "O Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Why?"

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "You curse in abundance and you are ungrateful to your husband."

Ingratitude is a common ailment among women. Instead of showing appreciation for the favours of the husband, they will, on the contrary, display their displeasure indicating thereby dissatisfaction. This ungrateful attitude of the wife brings much grief to the husband. Even if she is not pleased with the gift, never should she show by her action even a hint of dissatisfaction or displeasure.

Her expression of pleasure to her husband for the 'little' presents which he brings her is a source of great pleasure and happiness for him.

Never should she make any demands on him. She should maintain expenditure within his means. Spending more than his income or spending the entire income leads to much corruption and turmoil in the home. A wasteful wife will repeatedly express an ungrateful attitude. She will annoy and displease her husband. Her demands for items of luxury will sour her relationship with her husband. Even if he happens to be wealthy, she should refrain from making demands. Patience and satisfaction, contentment and pleasure for the husband should be her permanent qualities.

Hijāb

(A thought provoking poem about Hijāb)

What do you say when you look at me,
Do you see someone limited, or someone free,
All some people can do is just look and stare,
Simply because they can't see my hair,
Others think I am controlled and uneducated,
They are so thankful that they are not me,
Because they would like to remain 'free',
Well free isn't exactly the word I would've used,
Describing women who are cheated and abused,
They think that I do not have options or voice,

They think that being veiled isn't my choice,
They think that the veil makes me look caged,
That my husband or dad is totally outraged,
All they can do is look at me in fear,
And in my eye there is a tear,
Not because I have been started at or made fun of,
But because people are ignoring the One above,
On the Day of Judgement they will be the fools,
Because they were too ashamed to play by their own rules,
Maybe the guys won't think I am a cutie,
But at least I am filled with more inner beauty,
See I have declined from being a guy's toy,
Because I won't let myself be controlled by a boy,
Real men are able to appreciate my mind,
And aren't busy looking at my behind,
Veiled girls are the ones really helping the Muslim cause,
The role that we play definitely deserves applause,
I will be recognised because I am smart and bright,
And because some people are inspired by my sight,
The smart ones are attracted by my tranquillity,
In the back of their mind they wish they were me,
We have the strength to do what we think is right,
Even if it means putting up a life long fight,
You see we are not controlled by a mini skirt and tight shirt,
We are given respect, and never treated like dirt,
So you see, we are the ones that are free and liberated,
We are not the ones that are sexually terrorised and violated,
We are the ones that are free and pure,

We're free of standards that have no cure.

Exactly whom do we Dress for?

Ask any woman who dresses up before leaving home who she has dressed up for. Her answer will be, "for myself of course."
The question is, are we being honest with ourselves? Have we searched deep within our hearts to find the truth? If not, then let us not waste any more time because tomorrow may be too late.

Sisters, let's not be deceived by the enemy, Shaytān. In order to divert us from the path of Truth he will lead us into believing we are at the height of piety by merely covering our hair with a flimsy scarf. Not only are the scarves pretty and colourful, nowadays they even carry designer names! And the scarf is worn in such fashionable ways that in actual fact it enhances the face and leaves the throat and chest uncovered. Even if it was worn in such a way that the throat and chest were not exposed, use of make-up does nothing but make the face attractive, and use of scents emanate sweet fragrances that catch the attention of even those who, out of the fear of Allāh ﷻ, keep their gazes lowered. We need to question ourselves, whom are we making ourselves attractive for? Shaytān has led us into believing it is 'for my self-confidence', but it is in fact a green light for any man on the street, young and old to look.

The ever changing fashions has brought in tight, short dresses which leaves little to the imagination and which makes the fathers and brothers look away in shame, unable to say much in this dan-

gerous modern day environment. As if this wasn't enough, we arrogantly try to change what Allāh ﷻ has granted us. Plucking eyebrows and the recent fashion of wearing coloured contact lenses that changes the colour of the eyes is surely a cause of His wrath coming down on us.

All this for whom?
If the answer is 'for myself', one needs to ask oneself if one is always dressed in this manner, whether at home or out, in private or in public, in the morning or at night.
If the answer is 'for my husband', one needs to ask oneself if it is only for the husband, or does it include his brothers, friends and other non-mahram men.

If the answer is 'for Allāh ﷻ,' one needs to ask oneself if the manner of dressing is indeed according to the laws laid down by Allāh ﷻ.

If one goes out to school, college or work dressed in this manner then the question, "Exactly whom do we dress for?" applies even more.
A short time of quiet reflection will reveal that we are showing ingratitude to Allāh ﷻ Who has blessed us with beauty and has made us special. Are precious gems not hidden away safely? Are they left unattended and paraded around for anyone to steal?
Today the made-up face lights up the eyes of every male, young and old, but on the Day of Qiyāmah, only those faces kept pure with Wudhu will glow with light so that our beloved Prophet ﷺ,

who fought for us, cried for us and prayed for us all night will recognise us as his followers. We all claim to love Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ, but that claim will be a false one if we dress in a manner that displeases them. Let's not forget the words of our beloved Prophet ﷺ.

"A woman who applies perfume and passes by a (male) gathering has a doubtful character (the narrator mentions that by that he meant that she is like an adulteress). (Abū Dāwood, Tirmizi)

And let's take heed of the dire warning given in the Hadeeth:
"Those women who appear naked even though they are wearing clothes, who allure and are allured by others, will never enter Paradise, or even smell its fragrance even though the scent of Paradise can be perceived from a very great distance."

(Bukhāri, Muslim)

We claim to be Muslim women. Let us then become true Muslim women and submit to our Lord. Let us dress to please Him alone and not 'ourselves' or anyone else.

Rābiyah Basriyyah

Rābiyah Basriyyah was a very saintly, pious woman of her time. It is reported that after she passed away, the angels asked her, "Who is your Lord?" and "What is your religion." She replied, "I will answer your questions later, first you answer my questions." Thereafter she asked the angels, "Where do you come from?" The reply was, "From the Heavens." She then asked, "What is the distance

between the Heavens and the Earth?" The angels replied, "Five hundred years." Again, Rābiyah Basriyyah asked, "Have you forgotten your Lord?" The angels replied, "No." Rābiyah Basriyyah then said, "If you have not forgotten Allāh ﷻ even though you have travelled the distance of five hundred years, do you thing that Rābiyah has forgotten her Allāh ﷻ by going 6 feet underground whereas she never forgot the remembrance of her Lord throughout her life." The angels were astounded by this reply.

Moral: Women and likewise men should take a lesson from this incident. This is the status of a woman that even the angels were amazed by her reply. O Women! Where is the Rābiyah Basriyyah of today? No doubt the women play the most vital role in the upbringing of their children. Therefore it is vital that our women are of an exemplary nature in their daily acts of worship and obedience. This will inevitably make it easier for our children to tread on the same path.

Designer Eye-Brows

In a world which has been illuminated by the light of technology, we find our everyday environment speeding up in the race to keep up with the times. But amidst this cloak of modernism, can be found the ancient traits of the age of Jāhiliyyah (ignorance) that have been cleverly disguised into society. The essence of which affects all, especially our sisters in the Islamic world.

Allāh ﷻ, the All-knowing, has given the Muslim nation a guide to which they can refer to and has also provided a commentary (Tafseer) to this guide. The guidebook is the Qur'ān and the com-

mentary to this is the Ahādeeth of the final Messenger Muhammad ﷺ.

Allāh ﷻ has mentioned in the Glorious Qur'ān: ("Shaytān had said) And indeed I will order them to change the nature created by Allāh. (Allāh ﷻ says) **And whoever takes Shaytān as a protector (or helper) instead of Allāh, has surely suffered a manifest lost."** (4:119)

Women of the modern age are accustomed to wearing make-up and other cosmetics. Beautifying themselves with methods that change the very nature of their creation has become the norm of the day even for Muslim females. The above verse states that those people who change the creation of Allāh ﷻ are, as it were, helping Shaytān to fulfil what he had promised Allāh ﷻ of his evil intentions. It is them who are making Shaytān a protector other than Allāh ﷻ.

Muslim sisters are in the strange habit of shaping out their eyebrows. This is done by various means, such as shaving, trimming or even plucking out. Other means are also used which result in the removal of eyebrows until a thin 'designer' line above the eye remains. This habit of designing the eyebrows is totally forbidden in Islām. The aforementioned verse refers to this fact that we are not to change the nature of Allāh's ﷻ creation.

In a Hadeeth narrated by Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ood ﷺ the Holy Prophet ﷺ has stated: "Allāh ﷻ has cursed the ladies who tattoo others and those who have themselves tattooed, the women who remove the eyebrows, the women who have the eyebrows re-

moved, the women who artificially partition between their teeth for the sake of beautification, they are the ones who change the creation of Allāh ﷻ." (Muslim)

Imām Nawawi ﷺ has written in this commentary to the compilation of 'Muslim' that to remove the hair of the face is Harām except for a lady wising to remove facial hair besides her eyebrows, for that is permissible. Fatāwa Raheemiyyah' states that it is Mustahab (desirable) for a lady to remove the facial hair other than those of the eyebrows.

This Hadeeth refers to the Arabian women at the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who used to trim their eyebrows in order to look more attractive. The ladies of those times also used to have a small gap artificially placed between their two front teeth, which was also regarded as an attractive feature for a lady at the time. The Holy Prophet ﷺ saw this habit in the women of Arabia and forbade the Muslim ladies from doing the same. He mentioned that such practices invited the anger and wrath of Allāh ﷻ. Our Muslim sisters too should take heed from such advices and warnings. But alas, it is all too sad to see this evil habit prevailing even in the Muslim societies today. From University students to housewives and mothers, we see numerous Muslim females spending vast amounts of time and money in making themselves up to look more beautiful. However, if the woman wishes to beautify herself (remaining within the boundaries) for the sake of her husband (and totally conceals herself from non-mahram males) then it would be permissible, or rather desirable.

It is also worth mentioning that for a lady to cut or remove the hair of the head is also Harām. And that for men to remove or trim their beards or eyebrows is Harām as well. The only time when it is permissible for a lady to remove the hair of her head is in Hajj or Umrah the limit of which has been prescribed as well. May Allāh ﷻ give us all the ability to abstain from such evil habits and follow the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet ﷺ. Āmeen!

A Brave Woman

Sayyidah Umme Sulaym ؓ was the mother of Sayyidunā Anas ؓ. After the death of her husband, she remained a widow for some time with a view of devoting herself to the upbringing of her son. She was then married to Sayyidunā Abū Talhah ؓ and got a son named Abū Umayr from him. The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to go to her house and play with the child.

One day, Sayyidunā Abū Umayr ؓ was ill and Sayyidunā Abū Talhah ؓ was fasting. While Sayyidunā Abū Talhah ؓ was out in his job, the child died. Sayyidah Umme Sulaym ؓ washed and shrouded the dead body and laid it in the cot. She then took a bath, changed her clothes and decorated herself. When the husband returned home and had his Iftār he asked her: "How is the child?" She replied: "He is now in peace."

He was satisfied. The couple shared the bed for the night. When they got up in the morning, they had the following conversation.

Sayyidah Umme Sulaym ؓ : "I have got a question to ask you."

Sayyidunā Abū Talhah ؓ: "What is it?"

Sayyidah Umme Sulaym ؓ : "Suppose a person is entrusted with something. Should he deliver up on demand that which is entrusted on him or not?"

Sayyidunā Abū Talhah ؓ: "He must deliver up on demand. He has no right to hold back."

Sayyidah Umme Sulaym ؓ : "Abū Umayr was entrusted to us by Allāh ﷻ. He has taken him back."

Sayyidunā Abū Talhah ؓ was simply filled with grief. He simply said: "But why did you not inform me before?"

He went to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and narrated the story to him. The Holy Prophet ﷺ prayed for them and said: ***"Allāh ﷻ is likely to bless your sharing the bed with your wife last night."***

One of the Sahābah says:

"I lived to see the effect of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ blessing. As a result of his union with his wife on that night, Sayyidunā Abū Talhah ؓ got a son named Abdullāh. This Abdullāh had nine sons all of whom were Qāris."

It needs much courage and patience to do what Sayyidah Umme Sulaym ؓ did at the death of her son. She did not wish her husband to know about the death of the child while he was fasting and while he needed food and rest.

Stop Complaining Woman!

Sisters, we all know that women are said to be always complaining, never satisfied with anything and never being appreciative. Perhaps we should ask ourselves why are we labelled as complaining ungrateful women? They say that there is no smoke without fire, so perhaps there is a grain of truth in this statement.

Everyone knows the story of the very pious saint who was seen flying by everyone including his wife, who thought it was some pious Shaykh (not realising it was her own husband). When told it was none other than her husband she refused to accept it. When everyone insisted, she finally accepted that it could have been him since the man flying was not a good flyer, his legs had been crooked!

One may wonder how true this story is. However, whether true or false, one may well ask if women deserve this label. I can imagine you sisters getting up in arms at my audacity and impudence, but let's be honest and search deep within ourselves. Lets admit that perhaps we do complain about our men folk just a teensy weensy bit?

If so sisters, we can rise above it for the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. Lets show them that we can overlook coming home in the evenings with a frown, when what we could have done with was a loving, sympathetic smile after having put up all day with tantrum throwing teenagers, screaming six years olds and burpy babies. Lets

show them that we can be patient when they answer with single words when all we want to do is to pour our hearts out to them and let's avoid sulking, when after having slogged over a hot stove for hours to prepare his meal, he says, "It's not like my mother's". Lets not forget sisters, that they too have had a hard day trying to earn a living to make life easier for us. Its not easy out there you know.

"Who is asking for luxuries?" I hear you say. Come on sisters, let alone the luxuries, even bare necessities don't come cheap nowadays, and as for those sisters who expect new clothes at every occasion with perfectly matching shoes and scarves, and fancy house décor, well, need I say more? And what about the bills, especially the phone bill? We use the phone to complain to each other about this that and the other and it gets us nowhere. So sisters, lets avoid getting connected with every sister. Instead lets get connected with Allāh ﷻ and lets put our complains to Him since it is He alone Who will hear us. No matter what the need, instead of complaining to each other, lets plead instead to Him Who is the most powerful and in Whose Hands are the hearts of all men.

As for every brother, who are at this very minute sitting back with a self satisfied smile, they should perhaps contemplate upon the story about the very pious saint, who was forgiven only on the account of swallowing his anger along with his food when his wife once forgot to add salt to it. Contemplate also on the words of our beloved Prophet ﷺ:

"The best among you are those who are the best to their wives."

An Incident of Patience

The following incident should be a good lesson in Sabr (patience). Once there was seen a woman of exceptional beauty making Tawāf of the Ka'bah. Her beauty constrained people to exclaim that she lit up the world with her beauty. Someone commented: "Until today never was such a beautiful woman seen. Perhaps her beauty is because she has no care and no worry." When the woman heard this, she said: "What have you said? I am overwhelmed with grief. My heart is stricken with sadness. There is no one to share my grief with me." She then narrated her heart-rending story as follows:

"My husband slaughtered a goat for Qurbāni. My two young sons were playing nearby. The third child, an infant was in my lap. I went to prepare the food. The elder of the two sons said to his younger brother: "Come, I shall show you what father did with the goat. The younger son happily agreed. The elder son then slaughtered the younger one. When he realised what he had done, he fled into the mountain where a wolf caught and devoured him. His father who went out in his search was lost in the wilderness. Finally he died of thirst. Meanwhile, when there was a long delay and threatening silence, I went out to investigate. The infant in my absence pulled the pot from the fire. The boiling contents spilling over, killed the baby. After sometime when all this heart-breaking news reached my eldest daughter who was married, she suffered a severe shock and died. Now I am left alone to bear all this grief."

When the woman was asked: "How do you manage to survive with all this grief?". She replied: "The result of Sabr is goodness.

Those who panic and display impatience gain nothing."

Women in the Field of Knowledge and Islamic Arts

Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﵂

Urwah Ibn Zubayr ﵁ praises her in the following words: "I have never come across anyone as well versed as her in Qur'ān, Farāidh (inheritance), Halāl, Harām, poetry, history of the Arabs and their lineage. She was an expert on medicine as well.

Once Ibne Mulaykah ﵁ asked her where she had acquired her knowledge of medicine, to which she replied; "When Rasūlullāh ﷺ fell ill and a foreign delegation showed him treatment, I memorized it." She was also an expert in arithmetic. Many Sahābah ﵃ enquired various Masā'il from her, including inheritance.

Sayyidah Umme Darda ﵂ She was the wife of Sayyidunā Abū Dardā ﵁ and possessed great knowledge. Imām Bukhāri has mentioned her in his Saheeh.

Sayyidah Fātimah Bint Qays ﵂

She possessed a great understanding of Ilm. She once debated with Sayyidah Ā'ishah ﵂ and Sayyidunā Umar ﵁ on a certain matter for a prolonged period but they were unable to change her opinion. Imām Nawawi ﵀ writes: "She was amongst the first women to

make Hijrah and possessing such excellent intelligence, many Ulamā gave preference to her opinion."

Female Teachers of a great Scholar

Imām Jalāluddeen Abdur-Rahmān Suyooti ﷺ is an Islamic Scholar of great excellence of the tenth century. His vast knowledge is evident from his many writings which can easily fill a whole library and establish a separate institution of knowledge and research. A great part of this knowledge was acquired not from male teachers only, but also from female teachers. At that point in time, it was very commonly seen that women were deeply involved in imparting higher learning.

Daughter of Sa'eed Ibnul Mussayib ﷺ

Sa'eed Ibnul Mussayib ﷺ was a Tābi'ee and had a daughter who had become famous for her knowledge and achievements.

The Caliph proposed marriage to her but she refused and instead married one of her own poor students who was also an Ālim. The day after his marriage to her as he prepared to leave for the lessons being taught by Sa'eed Ibnul Mussayib ﷺ, she said to him: "Stay here. I shall teach you that knowledge which my father Sa'eed Ibnul Mussayib teaches."

The wife of the author of Badā'i-'ussanā'i

She was such a great jurist of her time that at one stage, the issuing of Fatāwa was solely dependant on her. Seeing her excellence, her father announced that whoever excels in knowledge and is proficient in Fiqh, will get his daughter's hand in marriage. It was then that the book of Badā'i-'ussanā'i was written and when its author placed this work before the girl's father, he approved of it and gave his daughter's hand in marriage to the author. Thereafter the knowledge of husband and wife gained such authority that no Fatwa was regarded as reliable until it was not signed by husband, wife and her father.

Daughter of Imām Tahāwi ﷺ

The standard of her knowledge was so high that the Imām used to dictate to her Hadeeth and Fiqh while she penned it down.

Eighty Women Teachers

The famous Muhaddith Hāfiz Ibn Asākir ﷺ had attained knowledge from various teachers, eighty of whom were women.

The Daughter of Ibnus Samāk ﷺ

The daughter of the famous scholar, Ibnus Samāk Koofi, used to correct him during his lectures.

Fātimah Nishāpūri

She was from among the tutors of Zunoon Misri ﷺ and he benefitted from her immensely.

Asmā bint Abdullāh

She was a Muhaddith of the ninth century and according to Imām Sakhāwi ﷺ, she had attained permission (to relate Ahādeeth) from twenty six teachers.

Umme Bakhtar bint Muhammad

She was the student of the renowned Scholars Imām Mizi ﷺ and Imām Barzali ﷺ. Many Ulamā in turn benefited from her and she granted permission to Hafiz Ibn Hajar ﷺ.

Juwayriyyah bint Abul Fadhl

She is the daughter of Hāfiz Abul Fadhl Irāqi ﷺ. She studied Ahādeeth from her father and renowned scholars like Abū Bakr Hāshmi ﷺ, Ibn Hātim ﷺ, etc. Imām Sakhāwi ﷺ who is her student writes, she had special knowledge in Hadeeth and many Imāms benefited from her knowledge.

Hasla bint Hasan

She acquired knowledge from Imām Barzali ﷺ and Imām Mizi ﷺ. She also learnt Tirmizi from them. Hāfiz Ibn Hajar ﷺ has mentioned her in the "Mu'jamush Shuyookh".

Khadeejah bint Ibrāheem

She studied under the famous Muhaddith Qasim Ibn Muzaffar ﷺ and other top ranking Muhaddithoon. Hāfiz Ibn Hajar ﷺ narrates from her.

Khadeejah bint Ali

She studied Muwatta Imām Mālik from Iz Ibn Kuwayk ﷺ accompanied by her father. Imām Sakhāwi ﷺ is her pupil.

Khadeejah bint Umar

She studied most of Saheeh Bukhāri and Dārami from the Muhaddith of the century Ibn Sadeeq. Senior Ulamā narrate from her.

Ruqayyah bint Yahyā

Imām Sakhāwi ﷺ says that she taught Hadeeth and many Imāms of Hadeeth have studied under her. In many different cities of Hijāz there are people who have heard Hadeeth from her. Her father was a Hāfizul Qur'ān and Hāfizul Hadeeth. He first made her memorize the Qur'ān and then taught her the following books: Umratul Hāwi, Mukhtasar Abi Shujā, Bukhāri and Muslim.

Zaynāb bint Kamāl

She hailed from a learned family. Her mother and sister are counted from among the senior scholars. She was also a Qāriyah and had a special passion for studying Seerah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Sārah bint Umar

Imām Sakhāwi ﷺ writes that prominent Ulamā heard Hadeeth from her and her death was a great loss to the Ulamā of Egypt.

Ā'ishah bint Ali

Her grandfather Abūl Harām as well as her father were Muhaddithoon. Her son was also from the senior Ulamā. She first studied Hadeeth under her grandfather and thereafter from many renowned Ulamā.

Hāfiz Ibn Hajar ﷺ has mentioned her in his book and said that in the latter part of her life many Ulamā studied under her.

Imām Sakhāwi ﷺ writes that she had memorized Ahādeeth and had a special interest in Fiqh and Seerah. She had an extraordinary memory and level of intelligence.

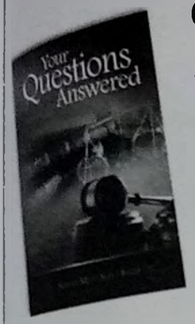
Ā'ishah Bint Hādi

Imām Sakhāwi ﷺ referred to her by the title of Masnadud Dunya. She had heard Hadeeth and attained permission from many senior scholars and had many students.

You Are Special...

A non-Muslim man asked a Muslim man, "Why do your women cover up their body and hair ?" The Muslim man smiled and got two sweets, he opened the first one and kept the other one closed. He threw them both on the dusty floor and asked the non-Muslim man, "If I asked you to take one of the sweets which one will you choose? The non-Muslim man replied, "The covered one." "Exactly!" said the Muslim man, "That's how we treat and see our women."

Other titles from JKN PUBLICATIONS



Your Questions Answered

An outstanding book written by Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām. A very comprehensive yet simple Fatāwa book and a source of guidance that reaches out to a wider audience i.e. the English speaking Muslims. The reader will benefit from the various answers to questions based on the Laws of Islām relating to the beliefs of Islām, knowledge, Sunnah, pillars of Islām, marriage, divorce and contemporary issues.

Hadeeth for Beginners

A concise Hadeeth book with various Ahādeeth that relate to basic Ibādāh and moral etiquettes in Islām accessible to a wider readership. Each Hadeeth has been presented with the Arabic text, its translation and commentary to enlighten the reader, its meaning and application in day-to-day life.

UK RRP: £3.00

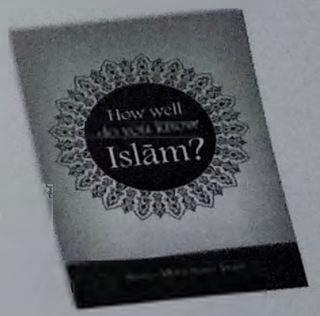
Du'ā for Beginners

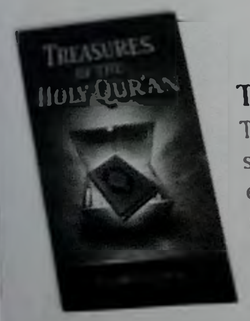
This book contains basic Du'ās which every Muslim should recite on a daily basis. Highly recommended to young children and adults studying at Islamic schools and Madrasahs so that one may cherish the beautiful treasure of supplications of our beloved Prophet ﷺ in one's daily life, which will ultimately bring peace and happiness in both worlds, Inshā-Allāh.

UK RRP: £2.00

How well do you know Islām?

An exciting educational book which contains 300 multiple questions and answers to help you increase your knowledge on Islām! Ideal for the whole family, especially children and adult students to learn new knowledge in an enjoyable way and cherish the treasures of knowledge that you will acquire from this book. A very beneficial tool for educational syllabus.





Treasures of the Holy Qur'ān

This book entitled "Treasures of the Holy Qur'ān" has been compiled to create a stronger bond between the Holy Qur'ān and the readers. It mentions the different virtues of Sūrahs and verses from the Holy Qur'ān with the hope that the readers will increase their zeal and enthusiasm to recite and inculcate the teachings of the Holy Qur'ān into their daily lives.

UK RRP: £3.00

Other titles from JKN PUBLICATIONS

Marriage - A Complete Solution

Islām regards marriage as a great act of worship. This book has been designed to provide the fundamental teachings and guidelines of all what relates to the marital life in a simplified English language. It encapsulates in a nutshell all the marriage laws mentioned in many of the main reference books in order to facilitate their understanding and implementation.

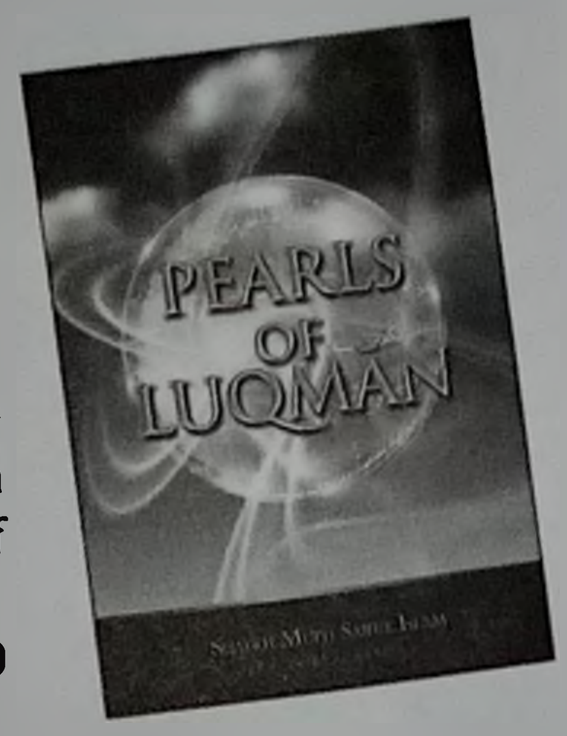
UK RRP: £5.00

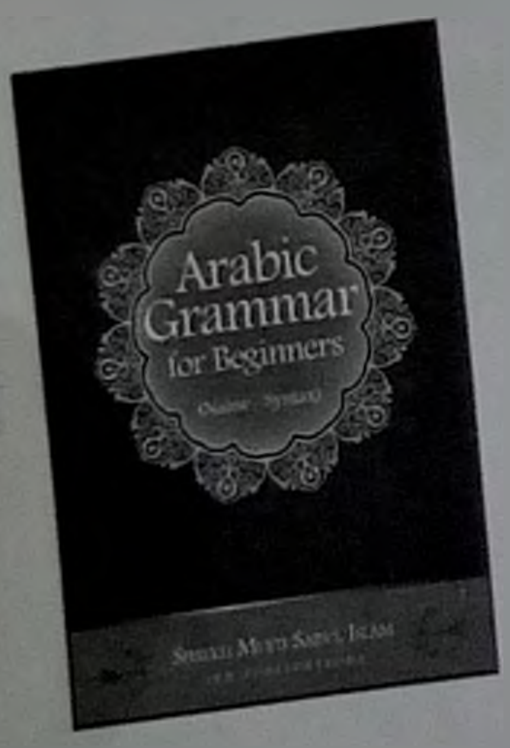
Pearls of Luqmān

This book is a comprehensive commentary of Sūrah Luqmān, written beautifully by Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām. It offers the reader with an enquiring mind, abundance of advice, guidance, counselling and wisdom.

The reader will be enlightened by many wonderful topics and anecdotes mentioned in this book, which will create a greater understanding of the Holy Qur'ān and its wisdom. The book highlights some of the wise sayings and words of advice Luqmān ﷺ gave to his son.

UK RRP: £3.00





Arabic Grammar Beginners

This book is a study of Arabic Grammar based on the subject of Nahw (Syntax) in a simplified English format. If a student studies this book thoroughly, he/she will develop a very good foundation in this field, Inshā-Allāh. Many books have been written on this subject in various languages such as Arabic, Persian and Urdu. However, in this day and age there is a growing demand for this subject to be available in English .

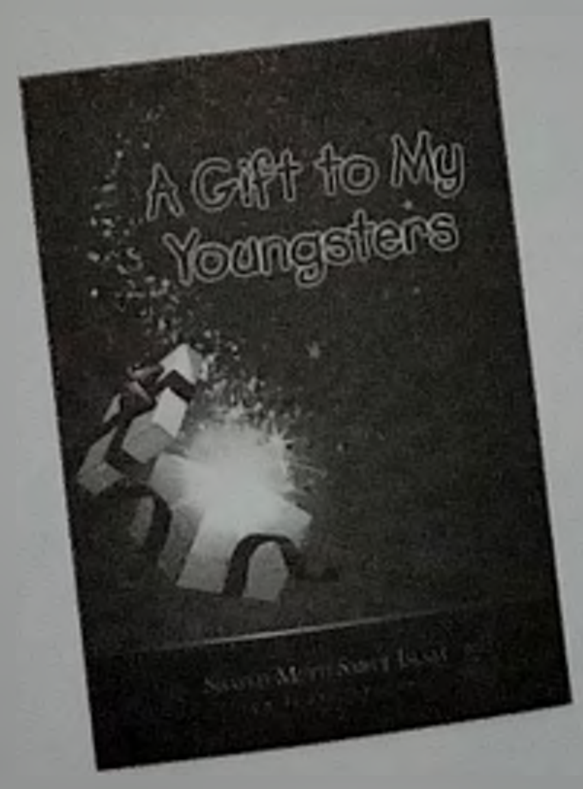
UK RRP: £3.00

A Gift to My Youngsters

This treasure filled book, is a collection of Islamic stories, morals and anecdotes from the life of our beloved Prophet ﷺ, his Companions ﷺ and the pious predecessors. The stories and anecdotes are based on moral and ethical values, which the reader will enjoy sharing with their peers, friends, families and loved ones.

"A Gift to My Youngsters" – is a wonderful gift presented to the readers personally, by the author himself, especially with the youngsters in mind. He has carefully selected stories and anecdotes containing beautiful morals, lessons and valuable knowledge and wisdom.

UK RRP: £5.00



A Gift to my Sisters

A thought provoking compilation of very interesting articles including real life stories of pious predecessors, imaginative illustrations, medical advices on intoxicants and rehabilitation and much more. All designed to influence and motivate mothers, sisters, wives and daughters towards an ideal Islamic lifestyle. A lifestyle referred to by our Creator Allāh in the Holy Qur'ān as the means to salvation and ultimate success.

As one article expounds, this book is 'A companion and guide, loyal and undemanding'. It is a very worthwhile investment.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām born in 1974 is a traditionally trained scholar. He memorised the Holy Qur'ān at the age of 13. He studied the Arabic language and various other traditional Islamic sciences at Dārul Uloom, Bury, UK, under many auspicious scholars notably, Shaykh Muhammad Yūsuf Motala. There he received authorisations in various books including the six major books of Ahādeeth. He studied Iftā under one of the senior Muftis in the UK, Shaykh Mufti Shabbir Ahmad.

In 1996 Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām established Jāmiah Khātamun Nabiyeen (JKN). Today, JKN has accelerated to become recognised worldwide as an institute of learning. As well as the Founder, Principal and Director of JKN, Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām took up responsibilities in many other departments locally, nationally and internationally.

He is the Editor of the famous family magazine Al-Mu'min. He currently holds the posts as the President of Tawak'kulia Jāmi Masjid in Bradford and Chairperson of Al-Kawthar Welfare Foundation. He is also the Patron of Al-Mu'min Primary School and Olive Secondary Schools in Bradford.

JKN PUBLICATIONS

UK RRP: £6.00

ISBN 978-1-909114-02-9